それでも町は廻っている

Soredemo Machi ha Mawatteiru

通称"それ町"

石黒正数

Ishiguro Masakazu

YOUNG KING COMICS

著者近影

性善説、性悪説というのがあります。
人の本性、根っこの所は基本的に
善なのか悪なのかって概念です。
僕は性善説を信じています。

それでも町は廻っている
12
石黒正数
少年画報社
COMIC210

「それでも町は廻っている」

なんと！今なら、好評発売中!!

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主婦のタンバンがメイドをつとめる喫茶「ミーサイド」はいつも賑やかで優しさに包まれながら営業中。ウサモと先輩の推理が冴え…ていたらこりるお話や、神コンパの崖の人が登場する話など、バラエティーそれ町ワールド絶好調!

それでも町は回っている

12

通称"それ町"

石黒正数

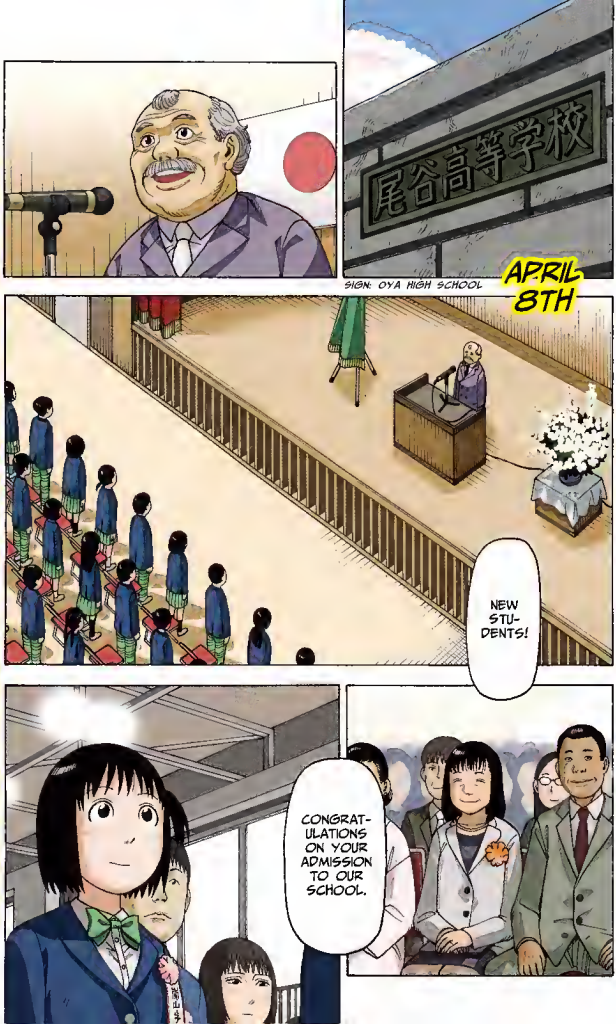
Ishiguro Masakazu

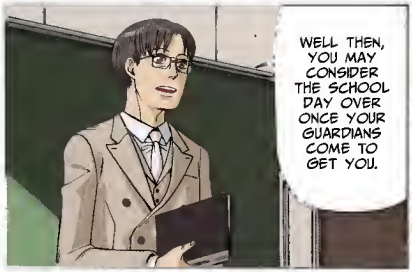
ゆーふぉー　おばけに
おもいをはせる

それでも町は廻っている 13

石黒正数

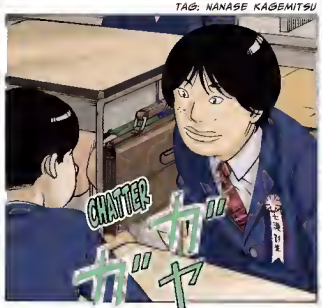
少年画報社

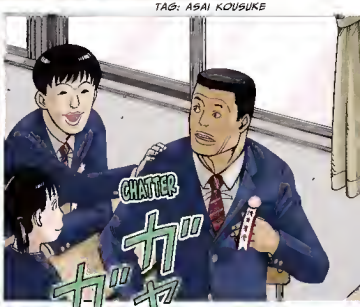

尾谷高等学校
APRIL 8TH
SIGN: OYA HIGH SCHOOL
NEW STU-DENTS!
CONGRAT-ULATIONS ON YOUR ADMISSION TO OUR SCHOOL.
AND YET, THE TOWN MOVES / ISHIGURO MASAKAZU



TAG: ASAI KOUSUKE

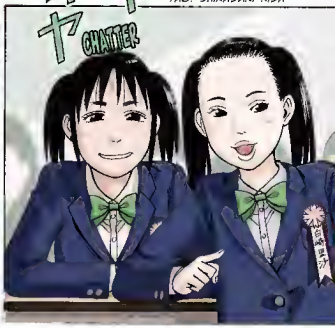
TAG: NANASE KAGEMITSU

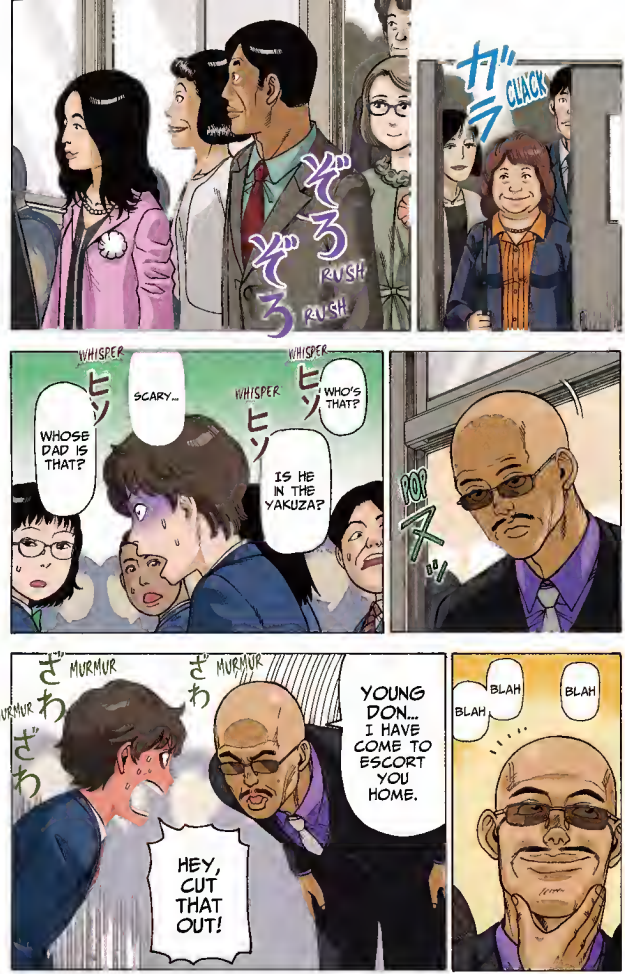


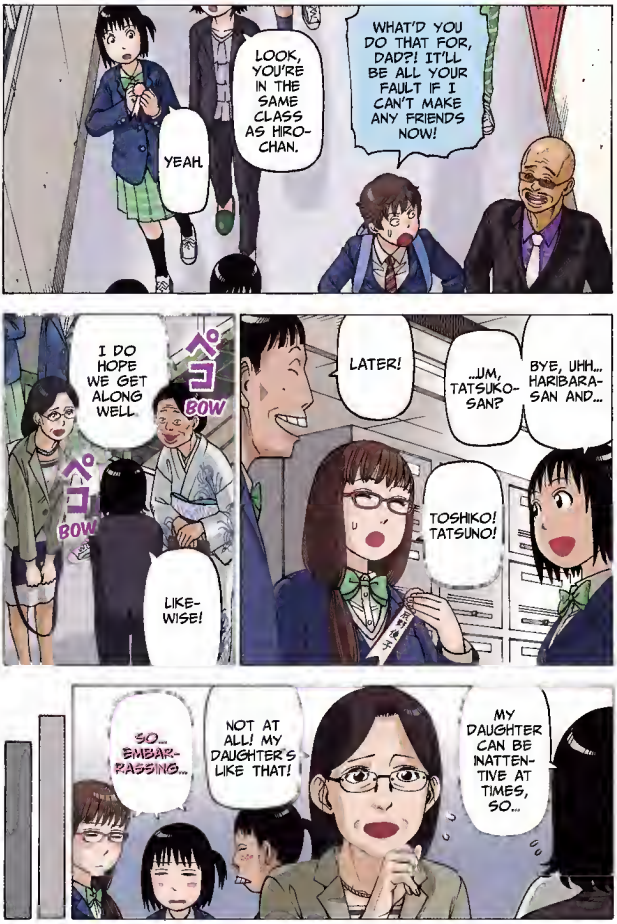


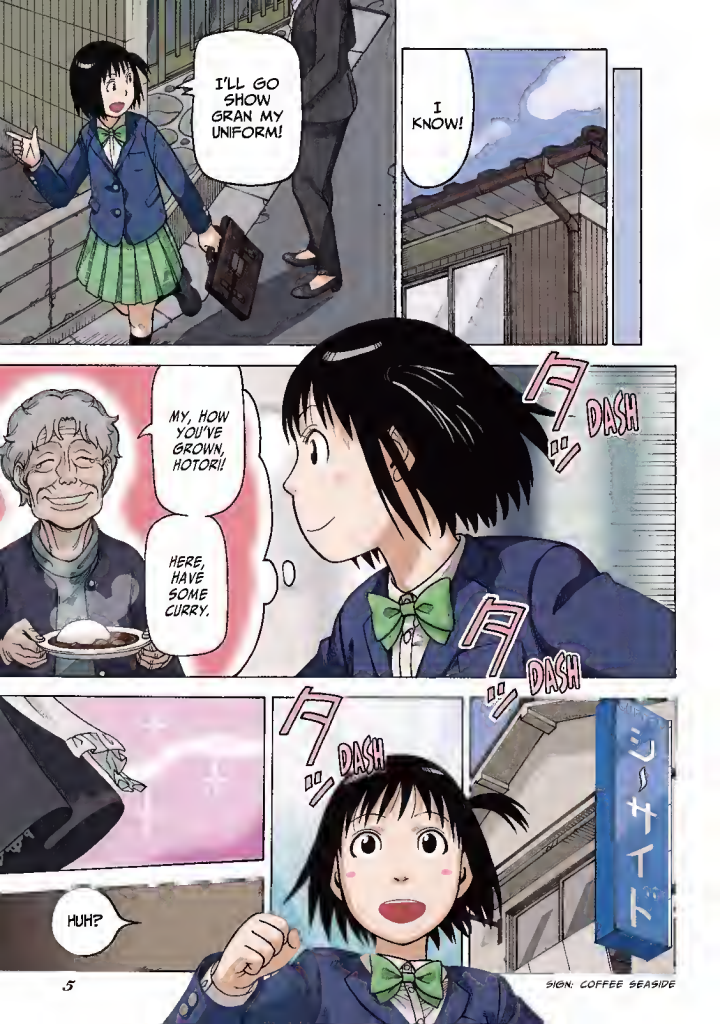
TAG: SHIRASAKI RISA

TAGS: TATSUNO, ARASHIYAMA HOTORI




ぞろ
ぞろ
RUSH
RUSH
ガラ
CLACK
WHISPER
ヒソ
SCARY...
WHISPER
ヒソ
WHOSE DAD IS THAT?
WHISPER
ヒソ
WHO'S THAT?
IS HE IN THE YAKUZA?
POP
ヌ
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
YOUNG DON... I HAVE COME TO ESCORT YOU HOME.
HEY, CUT THAT OUT!
BLAH
BLAH
BLAH


WHAT'D YOU DO THAT FOR, DAD?! IT'LL BE ALL YOUR FAULT IF I CAN'T MAKE ANY FRIENDS NOW!
LOOK, YOU'RE IN THE SAME CLASS AS HIRO-CHAN.
YEAH.
BYE, UHH... HARIBARA-SAN AND...
...UM, TATSUKO-SAN?
LATER!
TOSHIKO! TATSUNO!
I DO HOPE WE GET ALONG WELL.
ペコ BOW
ペコ BOW
LIKE-WISE!
MY DAUGHTER CAN BE INATTEN-TIVE AT TIMES, SO...
NOT AT ALL! MY DAUGHTER'S LIKE THAT!
SO... EMBAR-RASSING...



SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

GRAN, WHAT'S WITH THE OUTFIT?!
SOME KIND OF REVOLU-TION?!

通称"それ町"

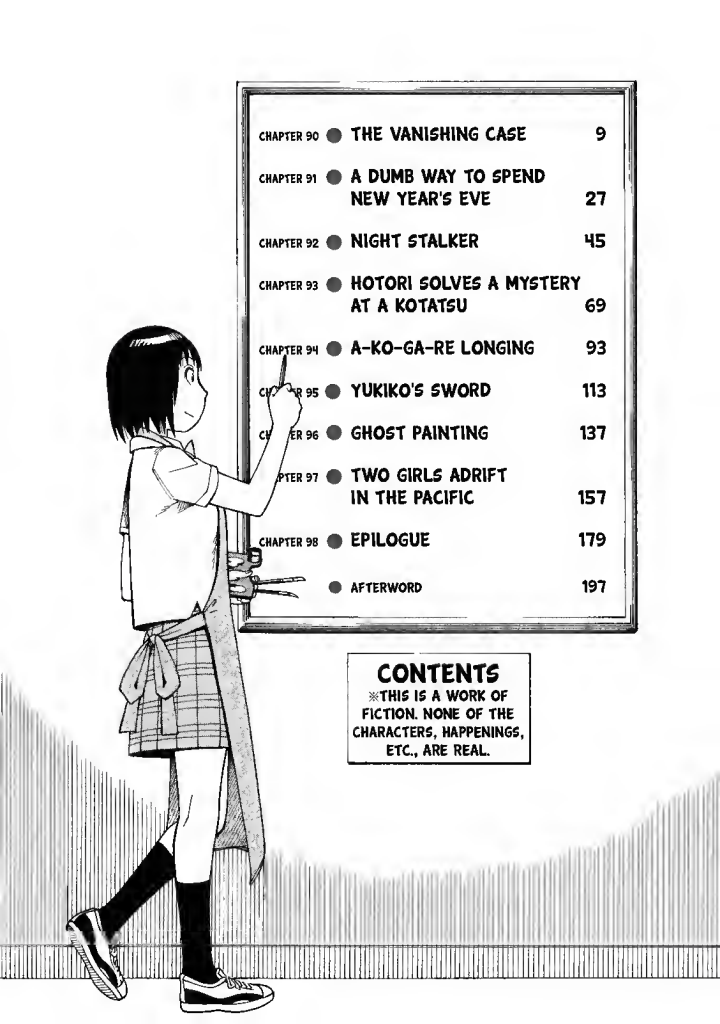
それでも町は廻っている

AND YET, THE TOWN MOVES

12

ISHIGURO MASAKAZU
石黒 正数

YOUNG KING COMICS



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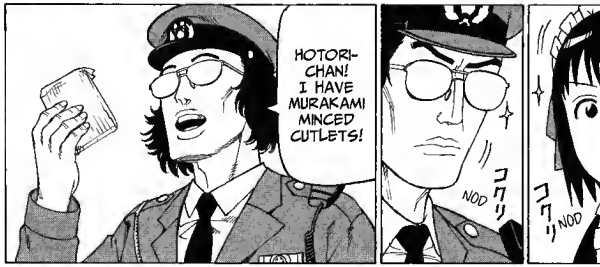
※THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. NONE OF THE CHARACTERS, HAPPENINGS, ETC., ARE REAL.

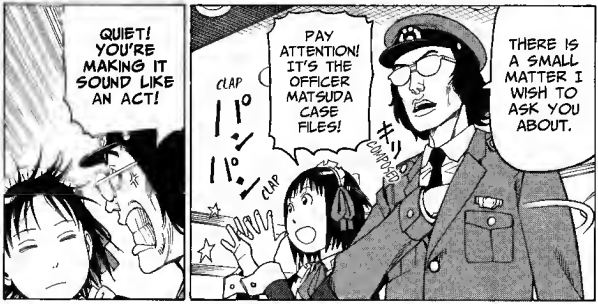
CHAPTER 90 THE VANISHING CASE

SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE



HEY!
YOU'RE THE FUZZ!!
WHO'S MY FUZZY FRIEND?
SILENCE
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
I THOUGHT YOU SAID IT'D BE A BIG HIT!
THAT'S ODD... OKAY, WE'LL USE A DIFFERENT GAG...

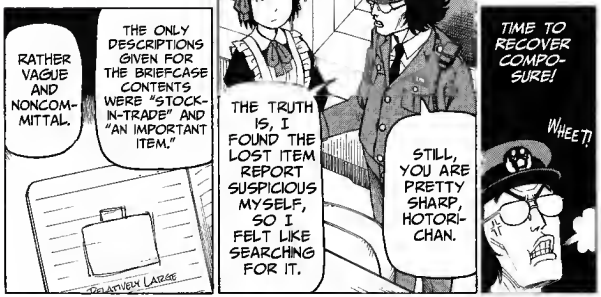
I'M SORRY... I WOULD GLADLY STAY AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS, EXCEPT THAT I HAVE IMPORTANT BUSINESS HERE...
YOU CAME BACK INSTEAD OF RUNNING AWAY.
GOOD FOR YOU.

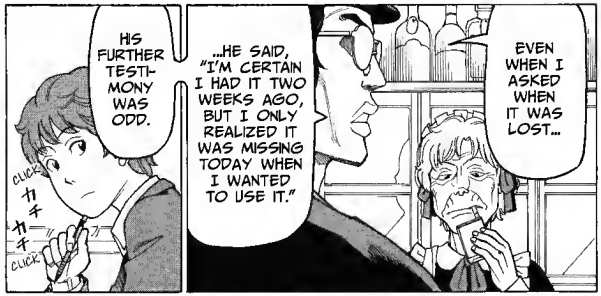

QUIET! YOU'RE MAKING IT SOUND LIKE AN ACT!
PAY ATTENTION! IT'S THE OFFICER MATSUDA CASE FILES!
CLAP
パン パン
CLAP
キリリ
RECOMPOSED
THERE IS A SMALL MATTER I WISH TO ASK YOU ABOUT.

THERE IS A CASE THAT HAS ME... SOMEWHAT CONCERNED.
キリリ
RECOMPOSED
I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP WITH THAT! LEAVE ME ALONE!
WHAT'S WITH YOU? AS YOUR PRODUCER, I'M JUST HELPING YOU FIT INTO MARUKO TOWN MORE QUICKLY.

HAVE ANY CUSTOMERS LEFT ANYTHING BEHIND HERE IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS?
SPECIFICALLY, A BRIEFCASE LIKE THIS...
RELATIVELY LARGE
NOTHING NOTABLE LIKE A BRIEFCASE.
IS THAT SO? IN THAT CASE, I'D LIKE TO ASK...
...DO ANY OTHER SHOPS IN THE AREA HAVE MAIDS?
OH, MY!
NO, NO... THIS PLACE ISN'T AN OPEN-EER FOR MAID CAFES.
DID A SHOP OPEN IMITATING MINE?!
OPEN-EER?
...PIONEER, MAYBE?
I THINK THAT'S WHAT SHE MEANT.
A-ANYWAY, IT'S FINE IF YOU DON'T KNOW OF ANY.

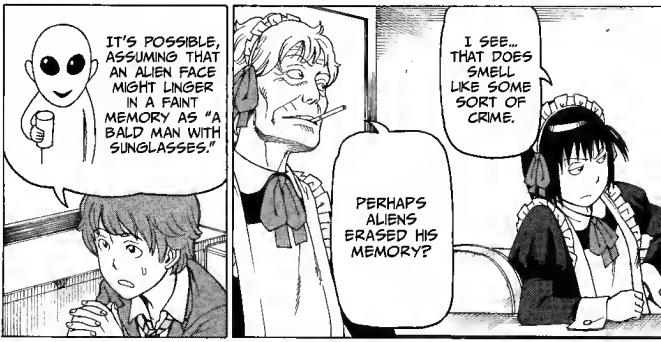
RIGHT, RIGHT.
IT'S NOT EXACTLY AN INCIDENT. SOMEONE JUST CAME TO THE POLICE BOX SAYING HE'D LOST SOMETHING.
WHAT'S UP?
WHAT INCIDENT ARE YOU INVESTIGATING?
SORRY ABOUT THAT...
THAT'S TRUE. USUALLY THINGS JUST END UP AT THE POLICE BOX. THE POLICE DON'T DO THE SEARCHING FOR YOU.
BUT AN OFFICER GOING OUT OF HIS WAY TO LOOK FOR IT...
...IS AWFULLY FISHY.
PLEASE WORK HARD SO YOU CAN BECOME A GOOD POLICEMAN.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY...
NOT THAT I MEAN YOU PERSONALLY.
ON THE CONTRARY, EVEN WHEN YOU TAKE IN LOST ITEMS, THE POLICE ACT LIKE IT'S SUCH A BOTHER!


TIME TO RECOVER COMPOSURE!
WHEE?!
STILL, YOU ARE PRETTY SHARP, HOTORI-CHAN.
THE TRUTH IS, I FOUND THE LOST ITEM REPORT SUSPICIOUS MYSELF, SO I FELT LIKE SEARCHING FOR IT.
THE ONLY DESCRIPTIONS GIVEN FOR THE BRIEFCASE CONTENTS WERE "STOCK-IN-TRADE" AND "AN IMPORTANT ITEM."
RATHER VAGUE AND NONCOM-MITTAL.
RELATIVELY LARGE


EVEN WHEN I ASKED WHEN IT WAS LOST...
...HE SAID, "I'M CERTAIN I HAD IT TWO WEEKS AGO, BUT I ONLY REALIZED IT WAS MISSING TODAY WHEN I WANTED TO USE IT."
HIS FURTHER TESTI-MONY WAS ODD.
CLICK
カチ
カチ
CLICK

"THERE IS A DAY TWO WEEKS AGO THAT I CANNOT REMEMBER CLEARLY."
"IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT I LOST IT THAT DAY."
WELL, WELL... YOU'VE PIQUED MY CURIOSITY.
OH, IMITATING KAMEI-DOU-SAN?

"IN A DARK PLACE WITH MANY PEOPLE, A BALD MAN WITH SUNGLASSES OFFERED ME A DRINK. I HAVE NO MEMORY BEYOND THAT POINT."
SO, HIS LAST MEMORY FROM TWO WEEKS AGO WAS...


IT'S POSSIBLE, ASSUMING THAT AN ALIEN FACE MIGHT LINGER IN A FAINT MEMORY AS "A BALD MAN WITH SUNGLASSES."
I SEE... THAT DOES SMELL LIKE SOME SORT OF CRIME.
PERHAPS ALIENS ERASED HIS MEMORY?

SO THAT'S WHY YOU CAME TO MY SHOP TO ASK ABOUT IT.
A MAID?!
"I HAVE THE FEELING THERE WAS A GIRL DRESSED AS A MAID THERE."
HOLD ON A MOMENT. HE ALSO SAID...

BESIDES... SEASIDE ISN'T A "DARK PLACE," EITHER.
AFTER ALL, SEASIDE DOESN'T GET MANY CUSTOMERS.
HOWEVER, "A PLACE WITH MANY PEOPLE" CONTRADICTS THE IDEA OF IT BEING HERE.

HM...? TWO WEEKS AGO... A LARGE CROWD...
OW...
WELL, IF YOU WALKED INTO THE CAFE FROM OUTSIDE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT...
...IT COULD SEEM LIKE IT'S DARK INSIDE.

I'VE GOT IT!! I KNOW WHERE HE LOST THE BRIEF-CASE!

ON THE DAY OF THE ENTRANCE CEREMONY, AT THE...
I STARTED WEARING A MAID UNIFORM ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO.

APRIL 8TH
喫茶
シーサイド
SIGN: CAFE SEASIDE
OH, RIGHT. YOUR ENTRANCE CEREMONY WAS TODAY.
THAT UNIFORM LOOKS GREAT ON YOU!
REALLY? EH HEH HEH...
I REALLY WANTED TO GO TO THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL YOU DID, SHIZUKA-NEECHAN...
...BUT I FAILED, BIG TIME.
NO, I'D SAY IT'S SIMILAR ENOUGH.
SEE, UP UNTIL NOW, HIGH SCHOOL HAS JUST MEANT THINGS LIKE STUDENT COUNCIL, CLUBS, AND SCHOOL FESTIVALS TO YOU...
BUT SOON, YOUR SHELTERED EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL WILL BECOME FAR MORE REAL THAN YOU'VE EVER KNOWN. IT'S SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.
OKAY... I DON'T QUITE GET WHAT YOU MEAN, BUT I WILL.

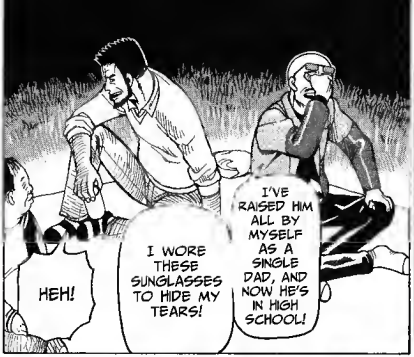
HOTORI!
OH.
SO YOU WERE THERE. I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A BAD DREAM, BUT WHEN I TURN AROUND, THERE'S GRAN... DRESSED AS A MAID.
DOESN'T THIS OUTFIT LOOK GREAT ON ME?
NEXT TO THE IMPACT OF YOU IN A MAID OUTFIT, THE SIGHT OF ME IN MY SCHOOL UNIFORM IS PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE!
HAVEN'T YOU SAID, FROM TIME TO TIME, THAT YOU WANTED TO WORK PART-TIME AFTER STARTING HIGH SCHOOL?
YEAH.
BUT MOM WON'T LET ME...
THERE IS A WAY...
...TO CONVINCE YOUR MOTHER TO ALLOW IT.
HUH?
INSTEAD OF SOME STRANGER'S SHOP...
...WHY NOT WORK HERE AT MY PLACE?

I HEARD THAT MAID CAFES ARE ALL THE RAGE NOW.
WHAAAAT?!
YOU'VE BEEN EATING CURRY FOR FREE HERE THE PAST TEN YEARS... I'M WILLING TO GIVE YOU A CLEAN SLATE IF YOU WORK FOR ME.
WHAA?!
AT SEA-SIDE?!

YOU MEAN...
GULP
ゴクリ
...I HAVE TO BE A MAID TOO?
THERE'S ANOTHER UNIFORM...
...ALL READY...
...FOR YOU.

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU MAKE YOUR DEBUT AT ONCE, TONIGHT?
TO-NIGHT?
TONIGHT... YOU MEAN, AT THE...?!
THAT...
...MAY BE FUN!

IT SURE IS SPRING.
IT'LL BE WINTRY AGAIN TOMORROW.
WHY'S HOTORI-CHAN DRESSED LIKE THAT?
I HEARD SHE'S WORKING PART-TIME AT SEASIDE.
HOTORI-CHAN! CONGRATS ON STARTING HIGH SCHOOL!
MISS MAID! POUR THIS GOOD MAN SOME SAKE!
DO IT YOUR-SELF!
BUT YOU'RE A MAID!
I ONLY LOOK LIKE ONE!
THAT'S PUTTING IT BLUNTLY...


I'VE RAISED HIM ALL BY MYSELF AS A SINGLE DAD, AND NOW HE'S IN HIGH SCHOOL!
I WORE THESE SUNGLASSES TO HIDE MY TEARS!
HEH!

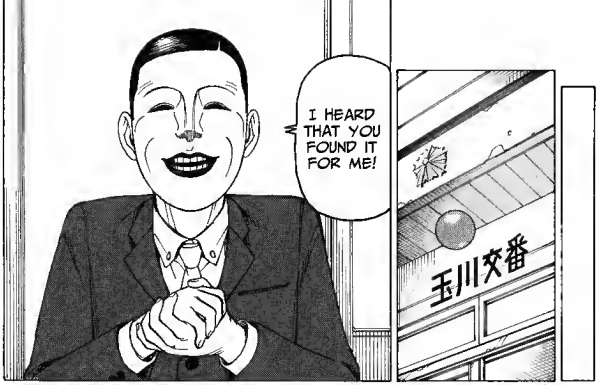
I WAS WEARING SUN-GLASSES TODAY...
...AT HIROYUKI'S ENTRANCE CEREMONY.

YOU REALLY ARE CLUE-LESS, DEAR.

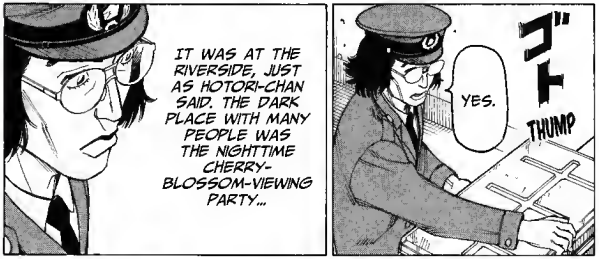
SUCK IT UP, OLD MAN! ACT YOUR AGE!
BUT I SEE TEARS IN YOUR EYES TOO, KIKU—

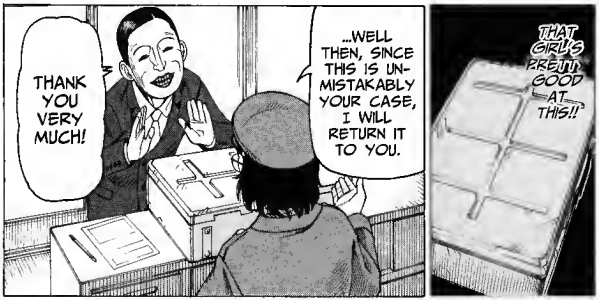
HEEEY! YOU UP THERE!!

WHO MIGHT YOU BE?
I AM A SALESMAN JUST PASSING BY.
YOU SURE SEEM CHEERFUL, SIR.
YOU MUST'VE PASSED BY HERE FOR A REASON. COME ON, HAVE A DRINK!
GLUG
THERE IT IS!



SIGN: TAMAGAWA POLICE BOX


IT WAS AT THE RIVERSIDE, JUST AS HOTORI-CHAN SAID. THE DARK PLACE WITH MANY PEOPLE WAS THE NIGHTTIME CHERRY-BLOSSOM-VIEWING PARTY...
YES.
ゴト
THUMP



SPEAKING JUST OUT OF PERSONAL INTEREST...
...I MUST SAY, I'M NOT FAMILIAR WITH THAT DEVICE. HOW IS IT USED?
OH, THIS?
パカ
SNAP
WHEN HELD LIKE SO...
...THE DEVICE WILL PROCEED TO ERASE YOUR MEMORY.
ビカ
FLASH

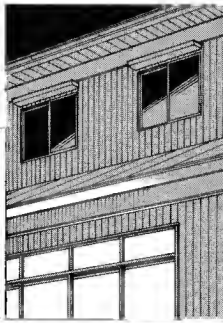
SO, DID YOU SEE WHAT WAS INSIDE THE BAG?
I FOUND AND RETURNED IT TO THE OWNER, SAFE AND SOUND.
WHATEVER HAPPENED WITH THAT LOST ITEM YOU WERE CONCERNED ABOUT?
PACKAGE: BEAN-JAM BREAD

CHAPTER 90 / END

CHAPTER 91
A DUMB WAY TO SPEND NEW YEAR'S EVE

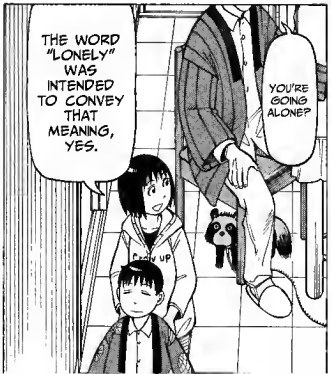
BOOK: SHALLOW RIVER BY KONDOU SHUUSAKU
[A REFERENCE TO DEEP RIVER BY ENDOU SHUUSAKU]

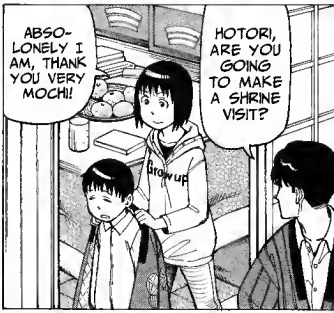
Grow up



NN...
GEEZ, GO TO BED IF YOU'RE SLEEPY.

NN...
TAKE-RU!
TAKE-RU.


THE WORD "LONELY" WAS INTENDED TO CONVEY THAT MEANING, YES.
YOU'RE GOING ALONE?
Grow up
Grow up


ABSO-LONELY I AM, THANK YOU VERY MOCHI!
HOTORI, ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE A SHRINE VISIT?
Grow up

OKAY, WHILE YOU'RE OUT...
...CAN YOU BUY SOAP, MILK, AND SOY SAUCE AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE?
SOY SAUCE, MILK, SOAP... RIGHT?
"SOY MILK SOAP." THAT'S HOW I'LL REMEMBER IT.
Grow up
WON'T YOU BUY ACTUAL SOY MILK SOAP?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO BUY THAT!
THERE ARE NOW TEN MINUTES LEFT IN THE YEAR.
TO US IN JAPAN, THIS YEAR HAS BEEN...
NOD
YOU'VE FOUGHT WELL, YUKIKO! SOON YOU'LL GET TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR!
AND NOW... FIVE!
FOUR...
THREE...
TWO...
ONE...

NOD
コクリ
YOU WERE SLEEPING?!

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYBODY!

YUKIKO, HAPPY NEW...

NO MORE!

URG...
HEY! OPEN YOUR EYES!

EXIT YUKIKO.
DRAG
ズル
DRAG
ズル
FIRST GRADE WAS FAR TOO SOON FOR YOU TO FACE THE NEW YEAR.

OF COURSE YOU FELL ASLEEP... IT WAS JUST TOO SOON...
ZARUDA?! WHO'S THAT?
...STAY BACK, ZARUDA ...

AHH, IT'S FROSTY COLD!

ALL RIGHT! NOW I'M REVITALIZED!
シャキーン
CHARGED
すぅー
INHALE
はぁー
EXHALE
THE FRESH AIR OF A FRESH NEW YEAR...
I'LL DRINK IT ALL IN!

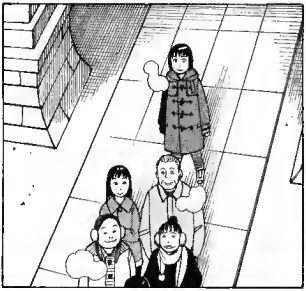
INDEED I AM!!
YES!!
HAPPY!

AH...
WAH HA HA HA!
SO I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST NOTING I WAS HAPPY!!
WELL YOU SEE... YOU LEFT OFF THE "NEW YEAR"!
...
?

...PLEEE-EEASE!
NOT SO LOUD! IT'S AFTER MID-NIGHT!
THANKS!! YOU HAVE A GOOD YEAR...

WELL... HAVE A GOOD ONE!

SIGN: HAVE A JOYFUL NEW YEAR!



SO...
I NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE YOU HERE.
IT WAS A JOKE ABOUT YOU LEAVING OFF THE "NEW YEAR" PART.

I KNOW THAT.
HUH? I WAS JUST GREETING YOU FOR THE NEW YEAR.

...WHEN HE SAID, "LET'S GO TO THE SHRINE FOR THE NEW YEAR," SO...
I WAS JUST HANGING OUT AT HOME WITH MY SENPAI FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL...

YOU MEAN "TURN OF EVENTS," RIGHT?
WHY THIS STRANGE BURN OF EVENTS?
YOU NORMALLY DON'T SEEM THE LEAST BIT INTERESTED IN STUFF LIKE EVENTS, YET HERE YOU ARE DOING A NEW YEAR SHRINE VISIT.

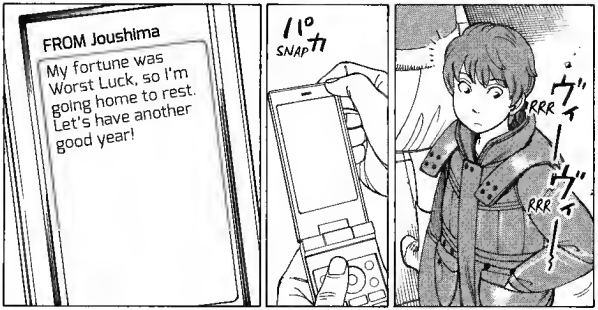
大吉
BEST
LUCK
願事
病気
待人
失物
引越
祝事

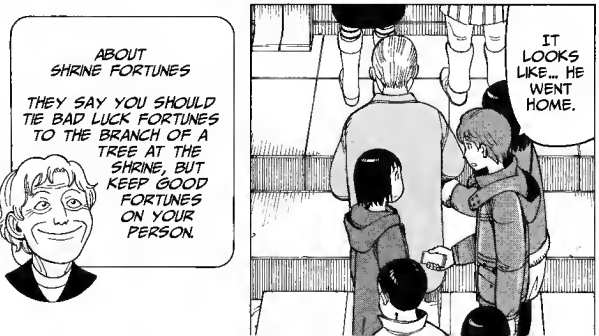
ピリ
ピラ
CRINKLE
CRINKLE

SWEET! I GOT BEST LUCK!!
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH BEST LUCK FORTUNES AGAIN?
TIE THEM TO A TREE BRANCH? OR DO YOU BURY THEM IN THE GROUND?
OH! I KNOW, YOU TOSS THEM FROM THE ROOF! THAT SEEMS CORRECT.
THAT'S FOR BABY TEETH.
HEEEY! SANADA!
奉
MY LUCK IS...

MARKER: OFFERINGS

HE WAS OVER THERE JUST A BIT AGO...
HM?
SO, WHERE'S THIS SENPAI OF YOURS?


FROM Joushima
My fortune was Worst Luck, so I'm going home to rest. Let's have another good year!
パカ
SNAP
ヴィーヴィー
RRR
RRR


ABOUT SHRINE FORTUNES
THEY SAY YOU SHOULD TIE BAD LUCK FORTUNES TO THE BRANCH OF A TREE AT THE SHRINE, BUT KEEP GOOD FORTUNES ON YOUR PERSON.
IT LOOKS LIKE... HE WENT HOME.

ガラ
スリ
RATTLE
WOBBLE
GOD!! PLEASE GET ME AND ARASHIYAMA CLOSER TO EACH OTHER SOMEHOW!!
I PRAY FOR MY FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND OTHERS IN TOWN...
...TO SPEND THIS YEAR FREE OF INJURY AND ILLNESS.
HEY... YOU DIDN'T INCLUDE YOURSELF IN YOUR PRAYER. HOW COME?
THEY SAY YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF, SO I DON'T BOTHER ASKING GOD FOR HELP PERSONALLY.

SHIRT: MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT

AND YET...
AND IT WAS MIDNIGHT FOR YASHIRO-SAN TOO...
IT'S LIKE A VISION.
THE SHRINE THAT'S USUALLY SO BLEAK IS BUSTLING AT MIDNIGHT.

オロオロ
FLUSTERED
WHAT?! WHY ARE YOU SO SAD ALL OF A SUDDEN?
ARE YOU OKAY? ARE YOU DRUNK?!
WHAAA?!
...I'VE WRONGED OTHERS SO MANY TIMES...
DRIP
ぼろ
DRIP
ぼろ
I'M SORRY FOR POINTING A CARVING KNIFE AT A CUSTOMER...
LOOK... I'LL SEE YOU HOME, SO LET'S GO!
...THAT I COULDN'T HELP WITH THE BIG CLEANING TODAY...
I'M SORRY FOR SPENDING SO MUCH TIME ON MY OWN ROOM...
I'M SORRY FOR USING A PAINT PALETTE AS A FRISBEE...
GHOST? YOU MEAN, THE ONE IN THE RUINED BUILDING BACK IN SPRING?
I'M SO SORRY FOR SPREADING THAT GHOST RUMOR.
HEY, WATCH OUT!

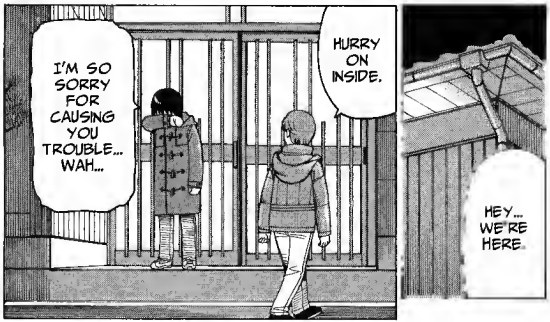
I'M SO SORRY FOR GETTING GARI-PE'S BOOK DIRTY.
GARI-PE?
I'VE NEVER HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE.
COULD IT BE SHE'S REGRESSING INTO THE PAST WITH EACH APOLOGY?!

I'M SORRY ABOUT SHIZUKA-NEECHAN'S BRA...
K... KAMEIDOU-SAN'S BRA?!
ブッ
BLUSH

MUMBLE... MUMBLE...
HUH? I CAN'T HEAR YOU! ONE MORE TIME!
...I'M SO VERY SORRY.
ONE MORE TIME!! PLEASE! ONCE AGAIN!!

WAH... I'M SORRY FOR WRAPPING GRAN'S PANTYHOSE AROUND MY HEAD!
I DIDN'T NEED TO HEAR THAT ONE...
?!
SHE MEANS ME?!
I'M SORRY ABOUT HIRO-CHAN'S...
THE GUYS IN HIS BRAIN
SIMMER DOWN, YOU GUYS!
MY WHAT?
SHHH!

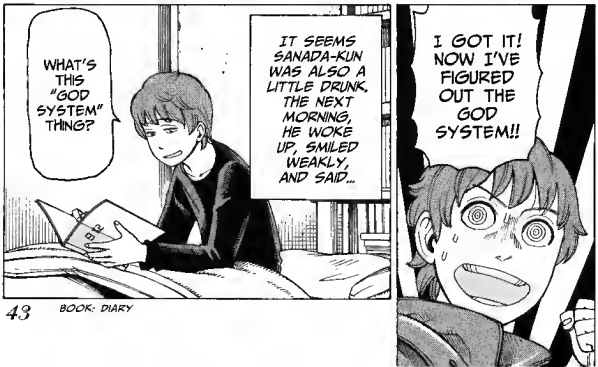
AND NOW SHE'S BACK TO THE PRESENT!
...FOOT THAT I'M STEPPING ON...

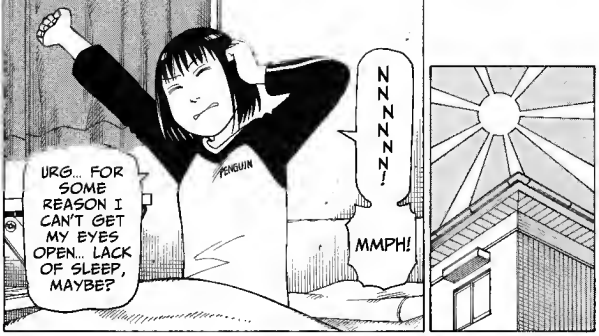

I'M SO SORRY FOR CAUSING YOU TROUBLE... WAH...
HURRY ON INSIDE.
HEY... WE'RE HERE.

OH!
SHEESH... DRUNKS ARE A PAIN TO DEAL WITH...

JUST NOW, I... WAS VERY CLOSE TO ARASHI-YAMA...
IF ONLY FOR A SHORT TIME...
IT'S BECAUSE I WISHED "PLEASE GET ME AND ARASHIYAMA CLOSER TO EACH OTHER" AT THE SHRINE!!

I WASN'T ACTUALLY WISHING TO LITERALLY GET CLOSER TO HER IN THE PHYSICAL SENSE...
I MUST'VE WORDED IT THE WRONG WAY.
AND SO THE MARKET PRICE IS BASICALLY... FIVE YEN FOR A WALK FROM THE SHRINE TO ARASHI-YAMA'S HOUSE...!


I GOT IT! NOW I'VE FIGURED OUT THE GOD SYSTEM!!
IT SEEMS SANADA-KUN WAS ALSO A LITTLE DRUNK. THE NEXT MORNING, HE WOKE UP, SMILED WEAKLY, AND SAID...
WHAT'S THIS "GOD SYSTEM" THING?

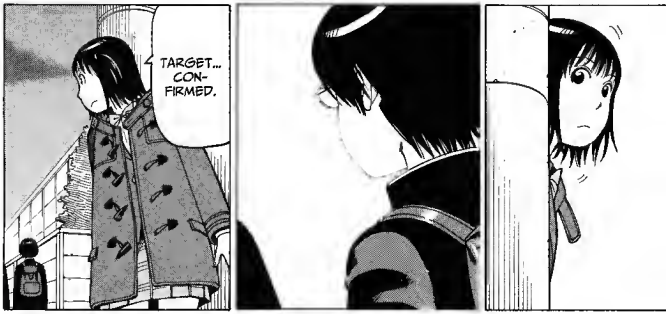


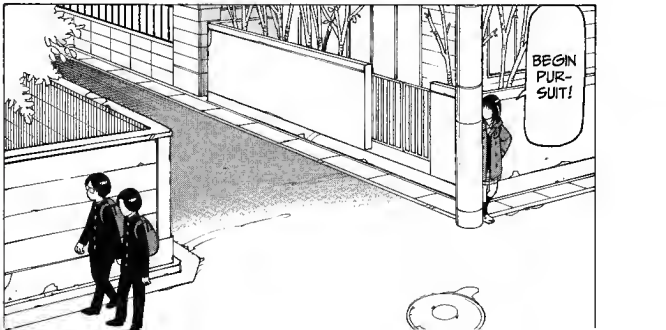
BOX. DOG FOOD

CHAPTER 91 / END

CHAPTER 92 NIGHT STALKER

SIGN: SOUTH THIRD MIDDLE SCHOOL





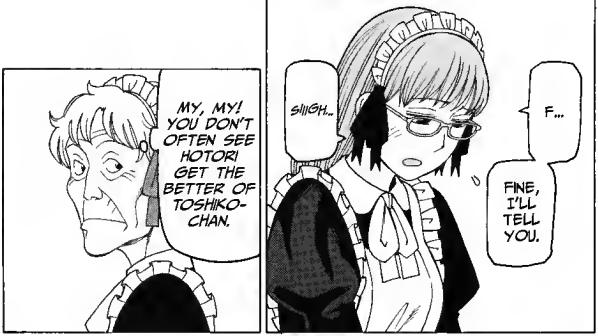
BOOK MOCK
ブック・モック
TARGET HAS ENTERED A BOOK STORE.
IT LOOKS TO BE A GOOD, OLD TOWN BOOK-SHOP.
BOOK MOCK
ブック・モック
I'D LIKE THAT KIND OF PLACE TO SURVIVE.
MAYBE I'LL BUY SOME-THING THERE ON MY WAY BACK.
WERE THERE ANY BOOKS I PLANNED TO GET THIS MONTH..?
WHAT THE... HUH?
HUH?
コミック プリズム
BETA BOY 4

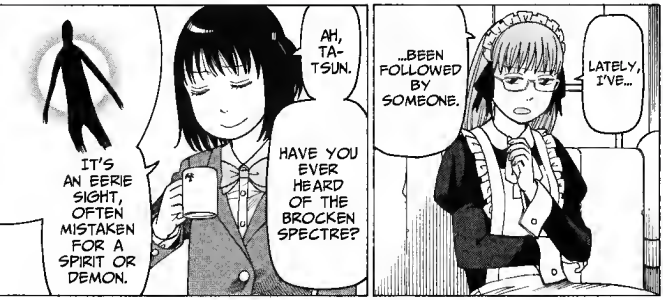
POSTER: COMIC PRISM

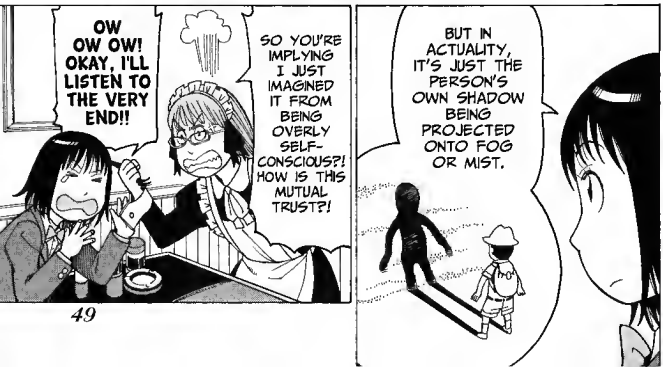
SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

GIVE ME A BREAK!!
I TAILED HIM TO THE NEXT TOWN FOR YOU WITHOUT EVER BEING TOLD THE REASON WHY!
WHO'RE YOU CALLING SHODDY, YOU FOUR-EYED DONNY-MATRIX?!
WHAT KIND OF INSULT IS THAT?

HIRING A DETEC-TIVE RE-QUIRES MUTUAL TRUST, RIGHT?!
IF YOU CAN'T TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO WORK FOR YOU.
URG...

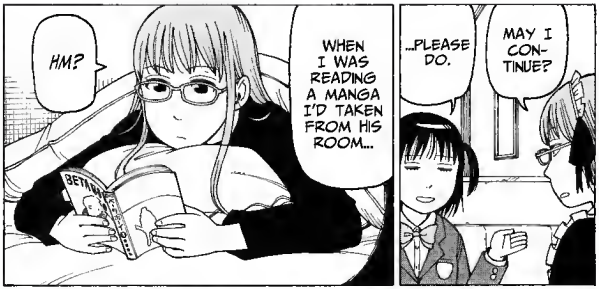

MY, MY! YOU DON'T OFTEN SEE HOTORI GET THE BETTER OF TOSHIKO-CHAN.
SIIIGH...
F...
FINE, I'LL TELL YOU.

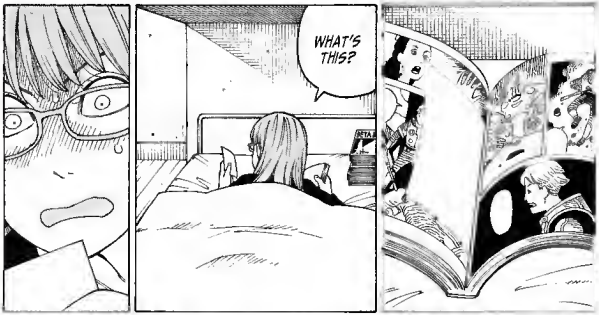

AH, TA-TSUN.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE BROCKEN SPECTRE?
IT'S AN EERIE SIGHT, OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR A SPIRIT OR DEMON.
...BEEN FOLLOWED BY SOMEONE.
LATELY, I'VE...


OW OW OW! OKAY, I'LL LISTEN TO THE VERY END!!
SO YOU'RE IMPLYING I JUST IMAGINED IT FROM BEING OVERLY SELF-CONSCIOUS?! HOW IS THIS MUTUAL TRUST?!
BUT IN ACTUALITY, IT'S JUST THE PERSON'S OWN SHADOW BEING PROJECTED ONTO FOG OR MIST.

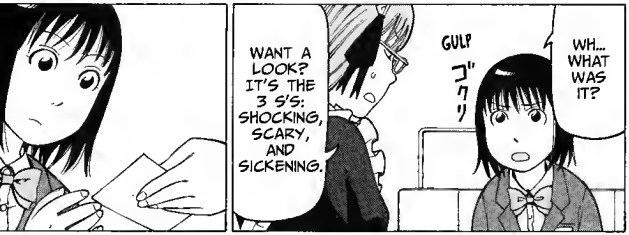
AT FIRST, I ALSO THOUGHT IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION.
BOOK: HELLE
BUT I SOON FOUND THAT...

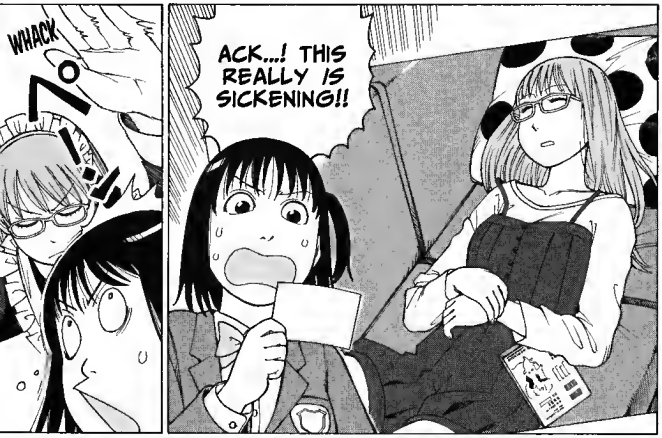
BETABOY
ALSO, ONE DAY...
...A GUY IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIFORM HAS BEEN FOLLOWING ME AROUND!
WAIT RIGHT THERE!
...WHEN I WAS READING A MANGA I'D BORROWED FROM MY LITTLE BROTHER'S ROOM...
WHAT IF HE WENT INTO *YOUR* ROOM WITHOUT ASKING?
WELL, I'D FLIP OUT, OF COURSE.
IS THAT BAD?
YOU JUST WENT INTO YOUR BROTHER'S ROOM AND TOOK SOMETHING, WITHOUT ASKING?


HM?
BETA
WHEN I WAS READING A MANGA I'D TAKEN FROM HIS ROOM...
...PLEASE DO.
MAY I CONTINUE?

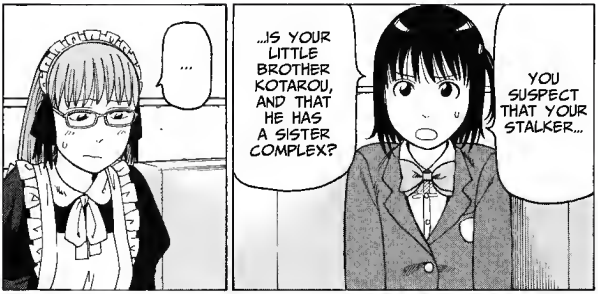

WHAT'S THIS?
BETA

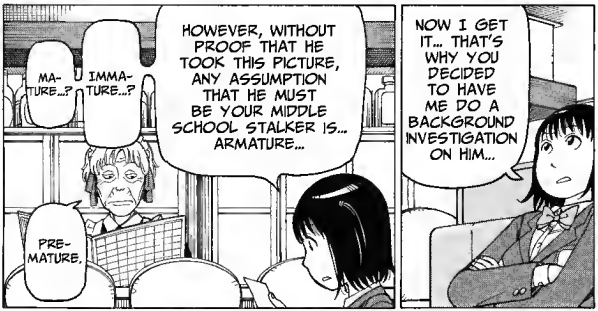
GYAAAAAH!


WANT A LOOK? IT'S THE 3 S'S: SHOCKING, SCARY, AND SICKENING.
GULP
ゴクリ
WH... WHAT WAS IT?


WHACK
ACK...! THIS REALLY IS SICKENING!!

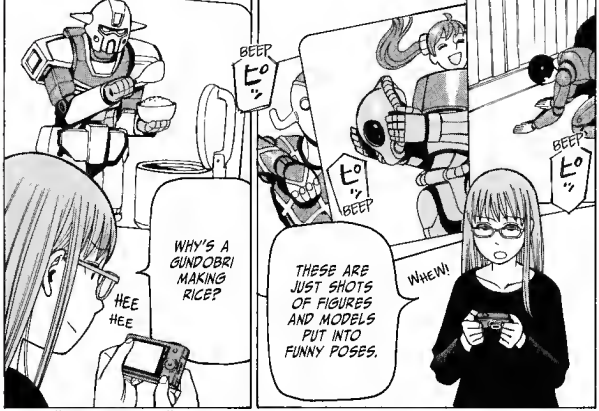
TO SUM UP...
I WASN'T SAYING I THINK YOU LOOK SICKENING WHILE YOU'RE ASLEEP!
Kinda sexy, actually.
THE STORY GETS REALLY COMPLICATED, SO WOULD YOU QUIT MAKING JOKEY COMMENTS?!


...
...IS YOUR LITTLE BROTHER KOTAROU, AND THAT HE HAS A SISTER COMPLEX?
YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR STALKER...

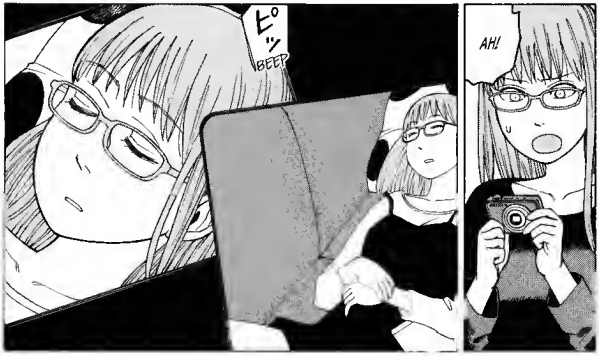

HOWEVER, WITHOUT PROOF THAT HE TOOK THIS PICTURE, ANY ASSUMPTION THAT HE MUST BE YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL STALKER IS... ARMATURE...
MA-TURE...?
IMMA-TURE...?
PRE-MATURE.
NOW I GET IT... THAT'S WHY YOU DECIDED TO HAVE ME DO A BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION ON HIM...

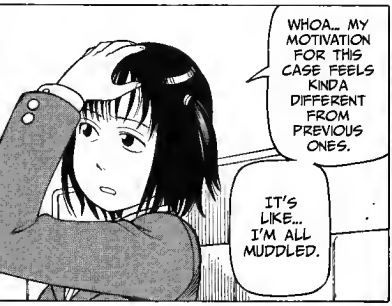
THIS IS... THE LIVING ROOM SOFA...
WHICH MEANS... A FAMILY MEMBER TOOK THE PHOTO?
OF COURSE I FELT THE SAME WAY. IN FACT, I PRAYED REALLY HARD THAT IT WASN'T HIM.

I STILL NEED TO FIGURE OUT HOW...
OH!
THIS PHOTO WAS PRODUCED BY A DIGITAL CAMERA PRINTER.
WHICH MEANS...
...HERE'S THE DIGITAL CAMERA!
虎太郎
SIGN: KOTAROU
FOUND IT!
LET'S SEE... TO VIEW THE DATA...
ピピ BEEP BEEP
ニーッ WHIRR



※A MECH APPEARING IN THE ANIME MOBILE INFANTRY GUNDOBRI

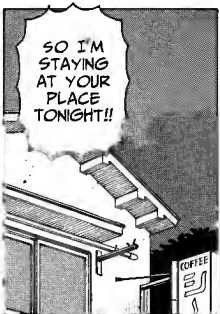



WHOA... MY MOTIVATION FOR THIS CASE FEELS KINDA DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS ONES.
IT'S LIKE... I'M ALL MUDDLED.

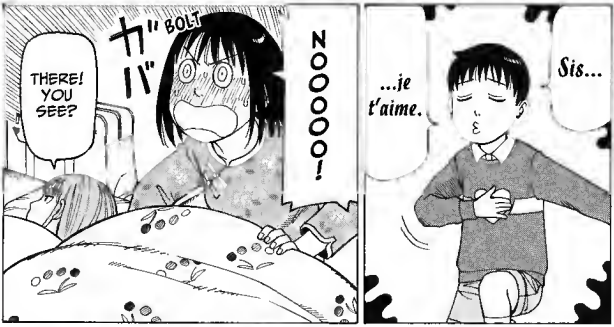
NO WAY...

I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING, SO YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!!
YOU CALL YOURSELF A JUNIOR DETECTIVE, RIGHT?!
I'M TOO GROSSED OUT TO GO HOME!!

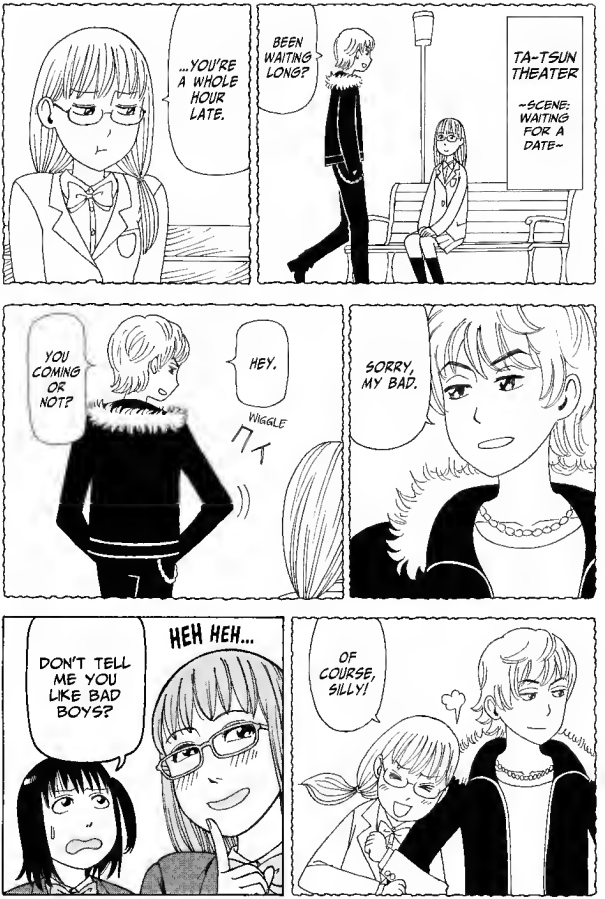
...COULD HE BE STALKING HIS OWN SISTER NOW? HE IS PRETTY MESSED UP ALREADY.
STILL... CONSIDERING HOW MUCH OF A SHUT-IN YOUR BROTHER WAS LAST WINTER BREAK...


SO I'M STAYING AT YOUR PLACE TONIGHT!!
COFFEE

TRY IMAGINING YOURSELF IN MY PLACE.
AND COMMON IN MYTHS AND NOVELS.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH A BROTHER FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIS SISTER? IT'S HUMAN.
WHO THE HECK DECIDED WHAT SHOULD BE TABOO FOR PEOPLE, ANYWAY?


THERE! YOU SEE?
カ" BOLT "パ
NOOOOO!
...je t'aime.
Sis...

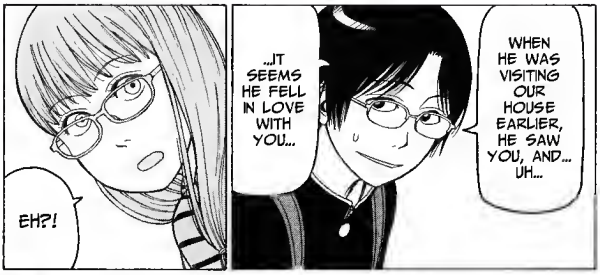
THIS IS MORE OF A PLAN B...
...BUT HOW ABOUT WE CONVINCE YOUR BROTHER THAT YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND?
LIKE WITH MANGA HEROINES, IT ALWAYS SEEMS LIKE THE GUY GETS DISAPPOINTED WHEN A FORMER BOYFRIEND SHOWS UP.
WELL, THAT COULD BE A BIG PROBLEM.
I THINK IT MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO SHOCK A MIDDLE-SCHOOLER BACK TO SANITY, THOUGH.
HM...
AT THIS POINT, I THINK SECRETLY PUTTING OUT FEELERS SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE.
I'LL TRY ASKING SANADA TO PRETEND TO BE YOUR BOYFRIEND, WHILE HIDING THE FACT THAT THE STALKER IS YOUR BROTHER FOR THE SAKE OF THE TATSUNO FAMILY HONOR.
!

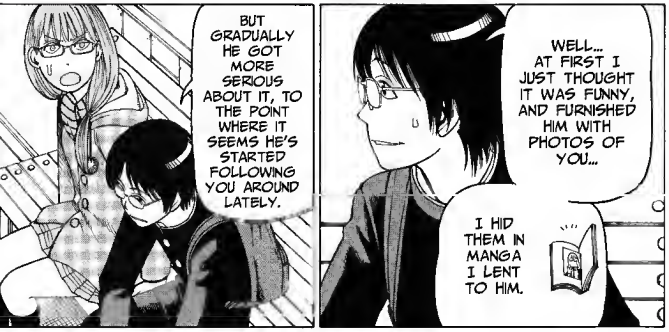

...YOU'RE A WHOLE HOUR LATE.
BEEN WAITING LONG?
TA-TSUN THEATER
~SCENE: WAITING FOR A DATE~
YOU COMING OR NOT?
HEY.
WIGGLE
SORRY, MY BAD.
DON'T TELL ME YOU LIKE BAD BOYS?
HEH HEH...
OF COURSE, SILLY!

IF YOUR BROTHER SHOWS UP, JUST STAY THERE! YOUR BOYFRIEND WILL COME RUNNING TO YOU REAL SOON!
BOOK MOCK
ブック・モック
コツ
TAP
UGH... IT'S COLD...

HEY, SIS.
KOTA...
WELL... THAT'S FINE. RIGHT NOW, I'M ALONE... SO IT'S THE PERFECT TIME.
I NOTICED YOU DIDN'T COME HOME YESTER-DAY.

I'VE GOT THIS FRIEND NAMED SASAMOTO KYOUICHI...
YOU KNOW HIM?
TH-THE KID YOU BRING HOME ONCE IN A WHILE?
I DON'T REMEM-BER HIM VERY WELL...

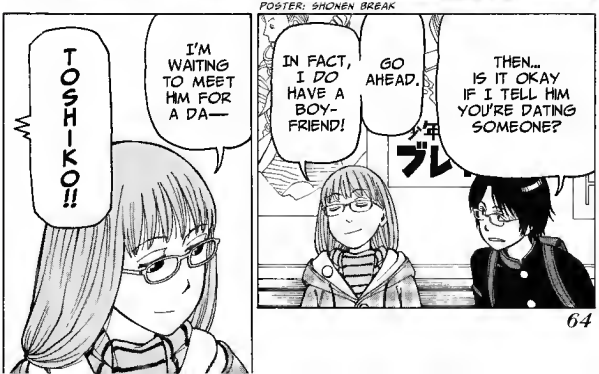

WHEN HE WAS VISITING OUR HOUSE EARLIER, HE SAW YOU, AND... UH...
...IT SEEMS HE FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU...
EH?!


WELL... AT FIRST I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY, AND FURNISHED HIM WITH PHOTOS OF YOU...
I HID THEM IN MANGA I LENT TO HIM.
BUT GRADUALLY HE GOT MORE SERIOUS ABOUT IT, TO THE POINT WHERE IT SEEMS HE'S STARTED FOLLOWING YOU AROUND LATELY.

YOU...
...SECRETLY TOOK PHOTOS OF ME AND GAVE THEM TO THAT KID?!
NO...! I DID TAKE ONE OF YOU WITHOUT ASKING, BUT I HAVEN'T GIVEN IT TO HIM YET!
Was it leaked?!
BUT... I'M SORRY IT'S GONE THIS FAR...

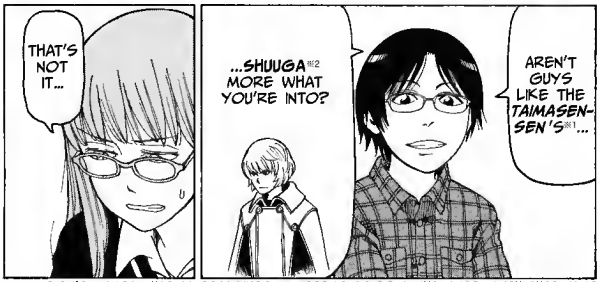
AND SO... I WAS THINKING THAT AT THIS POINT, I SHOULD EITHER INTRODUCE YOU PROPERLY, OR MAKE HIM GIVE UP...
TWO YEARS YOUNGER...
WHAT KIND OF KID IS HE AGAIN?

POSTER: SHONEN BREAK

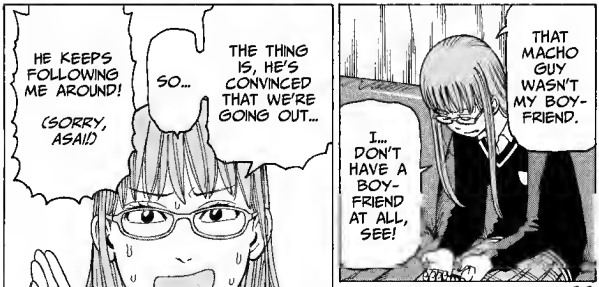

THEN... IS IT OKAY IF I TELL HIM YOU'RE DATING SOMEONE?
GO AHEAD.
IN FACT, I DO HAVE A BOYFRIEND!
I'M WAITING TO MEET HIM FOR A DA—
TOSHIKO!!

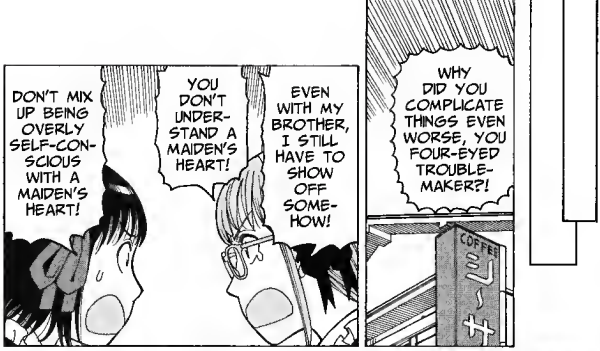
FOR ONE SUCH AS I...
アサーイ
ASAAA-I
...TO MAKE A LADY WAIT, IS TO HAVE COMMITTED A TERRIBLE FAUX PAS!
SORRY!! I COULDN'T GET SANADA! PLEASE FORGIVE THE STAND-IN!!
WELL, THEN...?
SHALL I CONVEY YOU SOME-PLACE WHERE YOU CAN VIEW AN OCEAN OF STARS?
OR WOULD YOU PREFER ANOTHER OF MY VARIOUS PLANS...?
UM... SORRY, BUT SHE RAN AWAY.
HUH?

NAMEPLATE: TATSUNO



※1: BOY'S MANGA THAT TA-TSUN LIKES ※2: SEEMS TO BE A CHARACTER WITH THAT NAME

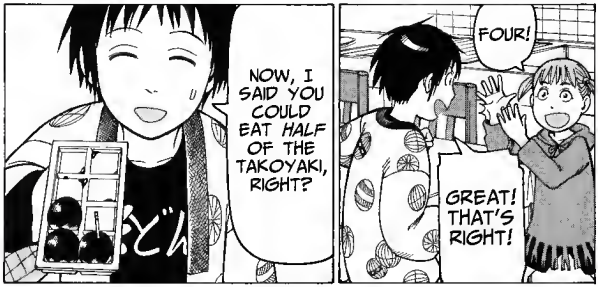

HE KEEPS FOLLOWING ME AROUND!
(SORRY, ASAI!)
SO...
THE THING IS, HE'S CONVINCED THAT WE'RE GOING OUT...
I... DON'T HAVE A BOY-FRIEND AT ALL, SEE!
THAT MACHO GUY WASN'T MY BOY-FRIEND.

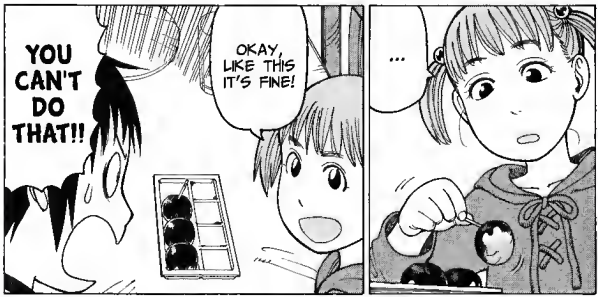

DON'T MIX UP BEING OVERLY SELF-CONSCIOUS WITH A MAIDEN'S HEART!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A MAIDEN'S HEART!
EVEN WITH MY BROTHER, I STILL HAVE TO SHOW OFF SOMEHOW!
WHY DID YOU COMPLICATE THINGS EVEN WORSE, YOU FOUR-EYED TROUBLEMAKER?!
COFFEE

WHAT?! THEN...
...I'LL FIND THAT GUY AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
HEY...
SIS TOLD ME THERE'S A STRANGE GUY FOLLOWING HER AROUND.
WELL... AT LEAST IT ISN'T ALL MUDDLED NOW, RIGHT?

CHAPTER 92 / END

SHIRT: UDON / BOX: DOG FOOD

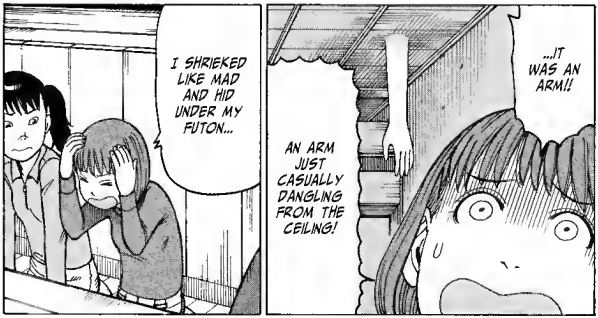




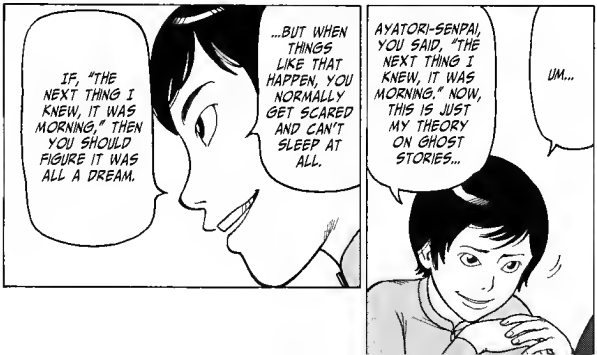
CHAPTER 93
HOTORI SOLVES A MYSTERY AT A KOTATSU

BOTTLE: HEY! TEA

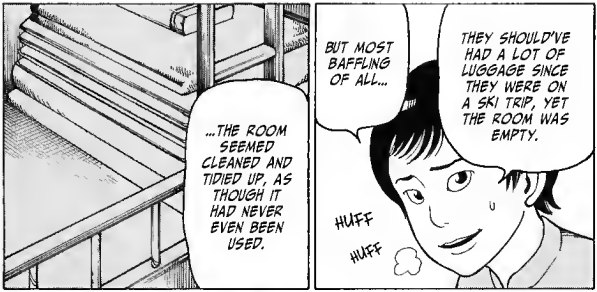
THIS STORY'S FROM WHEN I DID A TRAINING CAMP WITH THE CONCERT BAND...
WE DIDN'T REALLY USE IT FOR PRACTICE. WE JUST WENT TO SKI AND THEN RETURNED THE NEXT DAY.
...
.....
...
JUST AS I WAS WONDERING WHAT THE WHITE THING REALLY WAS...
...I TOOK A GOOD LOOK, AND...

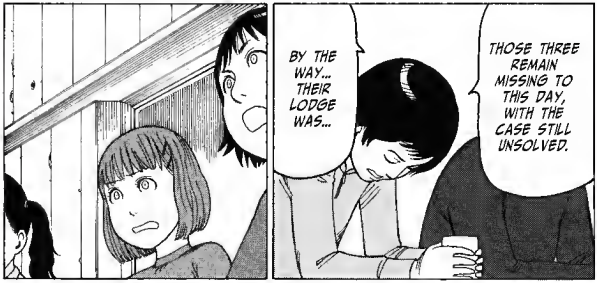

I SHRIEKED LIKE MAD AND HID UNDER MY FUTON...
AN ARM JUST CASUALLY DANGLING FROM THE CEILING!
...IT WAS AN ARM!!

GEEZ! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP IN A TATAMI-MAT ROOM SINCE THEN!
...AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW, IT WAS MORNING.


IF, "THE NEXT THING I KNEW, IT WAS MORNING," THEN YOU SHOULD FIGURE IT WAS ALL A DREAM.
...BUT WHEN THINGS LIKE THAT HAPPEN, YOU NORMALLY GET SCARED AND CAN'T SLEEP AT ALL.
AYATORI-SENPAI, YOU SAID, "THE NEXT THING I KNEW, IT WAS MORNING." NOW, THIS IS JUST MY THEORY ON GHOST STORIES...
UM...

FINE. I'LL TELL A SCARY STORY NEXT.
HEH HEH HEH. SETTLE DOWN...
SHE COULD'VE FAINTED, YOU KNOW!
YEAH!
GAH! THIS GUY REALLY TICKS ME OFF!
AN INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN F PREFECTURE IN 19XX.
IT HAPPENED HERE, AT THE DEER LAKE SKI RESORT.
OH! THE SPIRITING-AWAY INCIDENT?
YES! YOU'RE WELL-INFORMED, MU-CHAN.
THERE WAS A GROUP OF SIX SKIERS STAYING IN TWO ROOMS AT ONE LODGE.
THE THREE PEOPLE WHO WERE STAYING IN ONE OF THE ROOMS VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE.
IT WASN'T UNTIL THE NEXT MORNING THAT THEIR FRIENDS NOTICED AND REPORTED THEM MISSING.

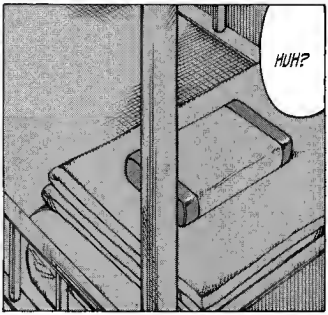

...THE ROOM SEEMED CLEANED AND TIDIED UP, AS THOUGH IT HAD NEVER EVEN BEEN USED.
BUT MOST BAFFLING OF ALL...
THEY SHOULD'VE HAD A LOT OF LUGGAGE SINCE THEY WERE ON A SKI TRIP, YET THE ROOM WAS EMPTY.
HUFF
HUFF

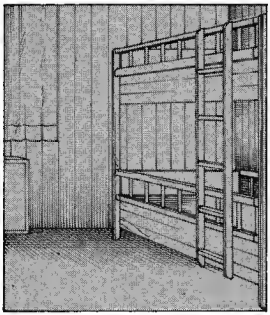

BY THE WAY... THEIR LODGE WAS...
THOSE THREE REMAIN MISSING TO THIS DAY, WITH THE CASE STILL UNSOLVED.

HEY! GET TO BED, YOU GUYS!
ビク
JOLT
SEN-SEI!
OUR BUS LEAVES EARLY TO-MORROW.
EEEK!
...WE ARE AT.
...HAR-MONY COT-TAGE...
THE SAME...

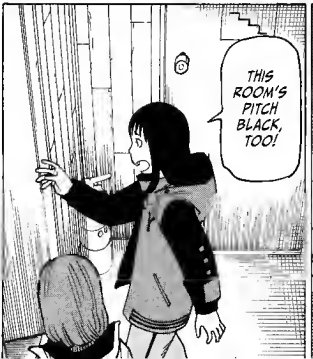
THE GIRLS' ROOM IS UPSTAIRS, AND THE BOYS' ROOM IS ON THE FIRST FLOOR.
EACH FLOOR HAS ITS OWN BATH!
MAKE SURE NOT TO GO DOWN TO THE BASEMENT!
RRR
YOP-PY!
THE OTHER GIRLS WENT TO HANG OUT IN THE BOYS' ROOM. WANNA JOIN THEM?
YEAH! LET'S GO!

SIGN: HOLLY ROOM

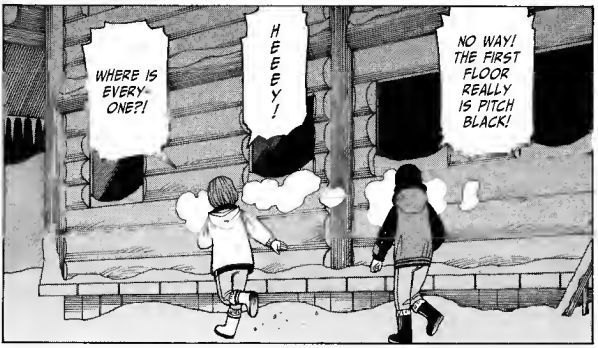


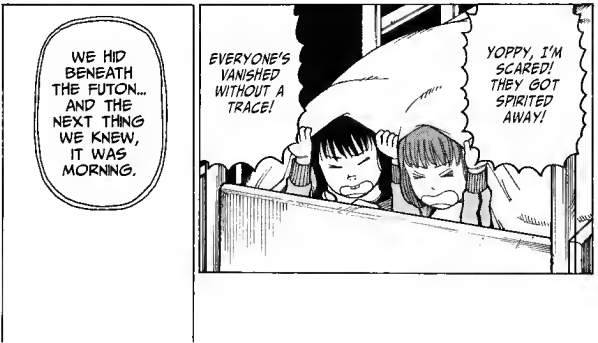


SIGN: BATHS ARE ON THE FIRST AND THIRD FLOORS.

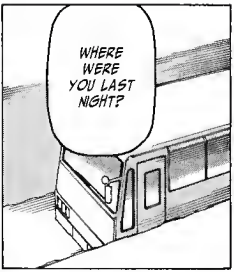


LET'S CHECK FROM OUTSIDE!
BUT WHY?! AREN'T THESE THE ONLY ROOMS ON THE FIRST FLOOR?!


WHERE IS EVERY-ONE?!
HEEEY!
NO WAY! THE FIRST FLOOR REALLY IS PITCH BLACK!


WE HID BENEATH THE FUTON... AND THE NEXT THING WE KNEW, IT WAS MORNING.
EVERYONE'S VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE!
YOPPY, I'M SCARED! THEY GOT SPIRITED AWAY!

WHAT TIME WAS THIS?
WE WERE IN OUR ROOM THE WHOLE TIME.


WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT?

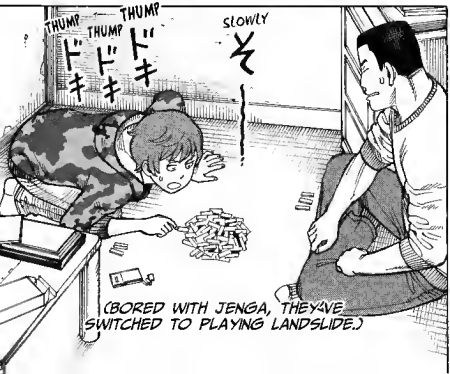
IF THAT WAS TRUE... THEN WHAT WERE THOSE EMPTY, TIDY ROOMS WE FOUND THE PREVIOUS NIGHT?

AT THAT TIME, WE WERE IN THE ROOM, STILL AWAKE. ALL OF US.
IT WAS AFTER WE'D EACH HAD OUR TURN IN THE BATH, SO AROUND 11 O'CLOCK.

WOOOOW!

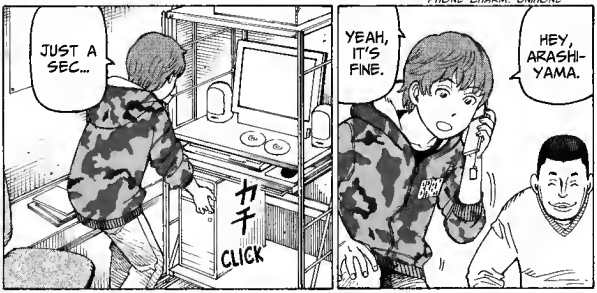
MAYBE IF WE'D STEPPED INSIDE ONE OF THOSE PITCH-BLACK ROOMS, WE'D HAVE VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE, TOO...

SIGN: SANADA'S FRESH FISH

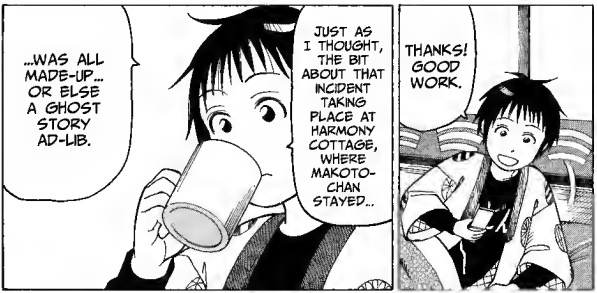


(BORED WITH JENGA, THEY'VE SWITCHED TO PLAYING LANDSLIDE.)

YAY! A DIVINE WIND BLEW IN!
ACK!
JOLT
ビク
CLATTER
ガラ
ガラ
CLATTER
ヴヴヴ
RRR
PHONE CHARM: ONIHONE


JUST A SEC...
カチ
CLICK
YEAH, IT'S FINE.
HEY, ARASHI-YAMA.

SERENITY COTTAGE? ARE YOU SURE?
IS THE NAME OF THE LODGE WHERE IT TOOK PLACE MENTIONED ANY-WHERE?
YEAH! THREE PEOPLE VANISHED, THAT'S THE ONE!
...A SPIRITING-AWAY INCIDENT AT THE F PREFEC-TURE DEER LAKE SKI RESORT.
SO, I'D LIKE YOU TO LOOK INTO...


...WAS ALL MADE-UP... OR ELSE A GHOST STORY AD-LIB.
JUST AS I THOUGHT, THE BIT ABOUT THAT INCIDENT TAKING PLACE AT HARMONY COTTAGE, WHERE MAKOTO-CHAN STAYED...
THANKS! GOOD WORK.

HMMM...
ASSUMING THAT, THEN THE LIKELI-HOOD THAT MAKOTO-CHAN WITNESSED A TRUE SPIRITUAL OR SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENON GETS WEAKER AND WEAKER.

PIECE OF CAKE.
HEY, I'VE SOLVED THE MYS-TERY.
...OH!
うどん

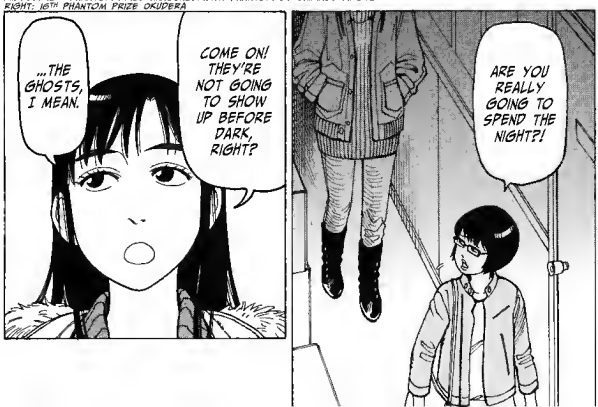
SIGN: LITERATURE DIVISION

BUILDING: HOUGA PUBLISHING

LEFT POSTER: 13TH PHANTOM PRIZE RECIPIENT MONISHI KAZUYA: SEA URCHIN AIRSHIP

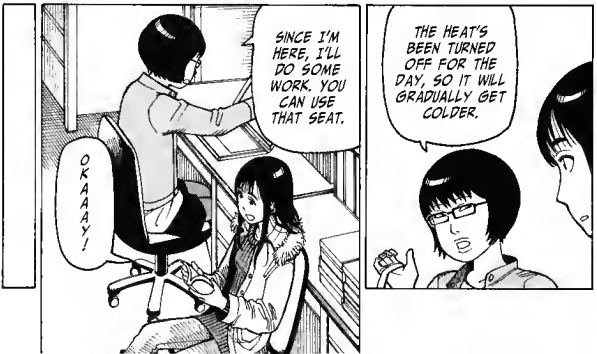
MIDDLE: 18TH PHANTOM PRIZE ANNOUNCEMENT: PHANTOM BY SHIMABE HIROTO

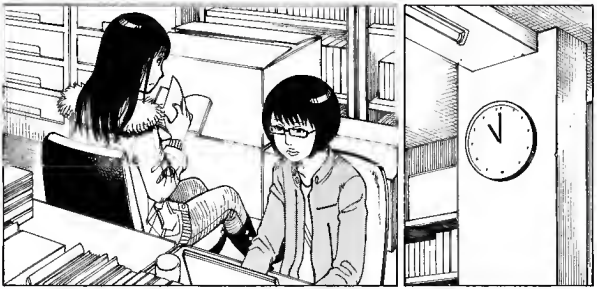
RIGHT: 16TH PHANTOM PRIZE OKUDERA

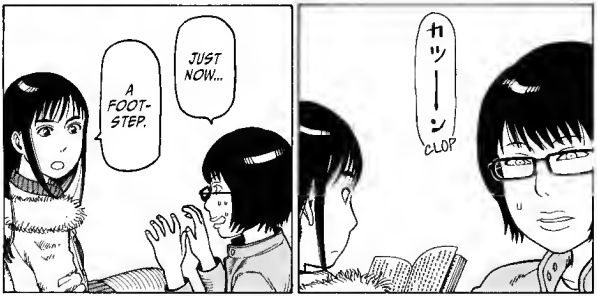


THERE'S NO CONSISTENCY THERE...
NOT ONLY THAT, THERE ARE A LOT OF WITNESSES FOR THINGS HERE LIKE BALLS OF LIGHT, A HEADLESS SALESMAN, AN ARMORED WARRIOR, ETC., ETC.
I'VE HEARD STRANGE FOOTSTEPS MYSELF!
YOU'RE MAKING LIGHT OF THIS, BUT... THEY REALLY EXIST!
OH, YOU CAN HAVE THIS POCKET HAND WARMER IF YOU LIKE.
WELL, I HAVE TO SEE IT FOR MYSELF.
AND SO, THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WORKING OVERTIME HAVE RAPIDLY DECREASED.

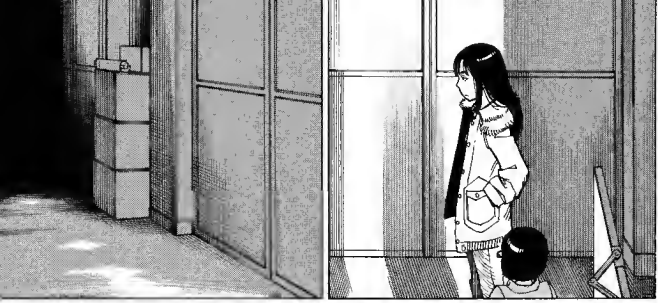
PACKAGE: POCKET WARMER

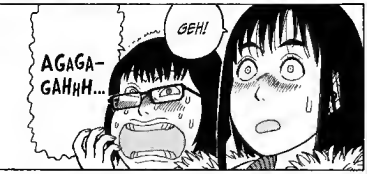

SINCE I'M HERE, I'LL DO SOME WORK. YOU CAN USE THAT SEAT.
OKAAAY!
THE HEAT'S BEEN TURNED OFF FOR THE DAY, SO IT WILL GRADUALLY GET COLDER.



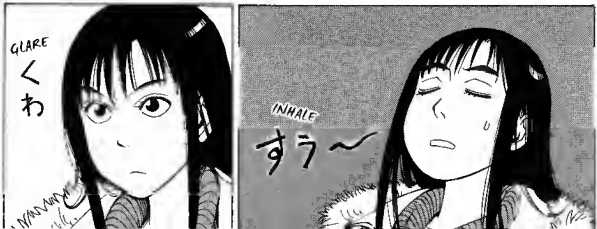

JUST NOW...
A FOOT-STEP.
カツーン
CLOP

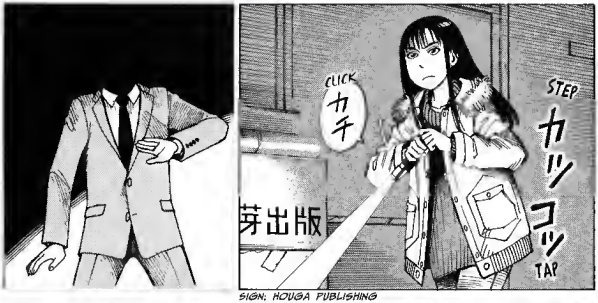
KUROSAKI-SAN, LET'S GO TAKE A LOOK.
HUH? WHAA?!
I HAVE TO GO, TOO?!
IT FEELS TOO EARLY FOR A GHOST TO SHOW UP.
THAT COULD BE ANOTHER LATE-STAYING EMPLOYEE ON ONE OF THE OTHER FLOORS, OR A SECURITY GUARD.




AGAGA-
GAHHH...
GEH!

PRAY
PRAY
ヘナ
ヘナ
NANMYOU HOU
REN SOU,
NOUMAKUEN,
SAARADABAA,
NISHINIPPORI...

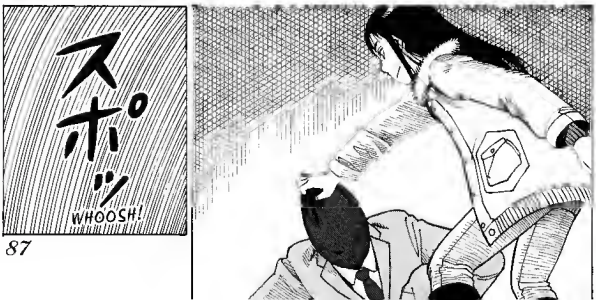

GLARE
くわ
INHALE
すう〜



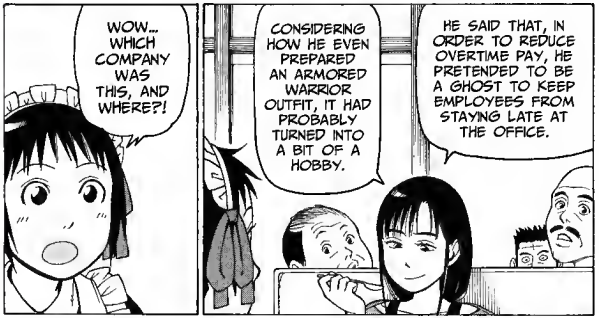
SIGN: HOUGA PUBLISHING

HEEEY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
ドサ
WHUMP
URG!

GRIN
ニヤリ
OW OW OW OW OW!


スポッ
WHOOSH!

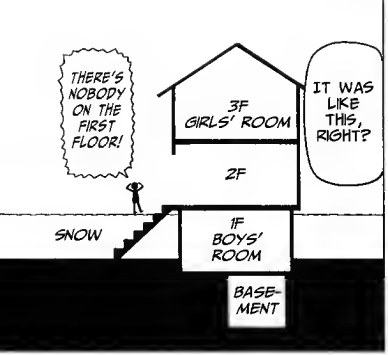
THE CULPRIT WAS THE COMPANY PRESI-DENT.

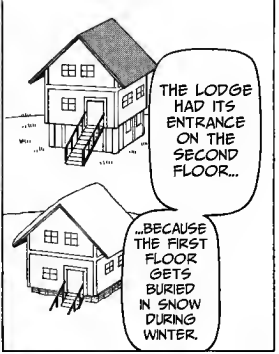

WOW... WHICH COMPANY WAS THIS, AND WHERE?!
CONSIDERING HOW HE EVEN PREPARED AN ARMORED WARRIOR OUTFIT, IT HAD PROBABLY TURNED INTO A BIT OF A HOBBY.
HE SAID THAT, IN ORDER TO REDUCE OVERTIME PAY, HE PRETENDED TO BE A GHOST TO KEEP EMPLOYEES FROM STAYING LATE AT THE OFFICE.

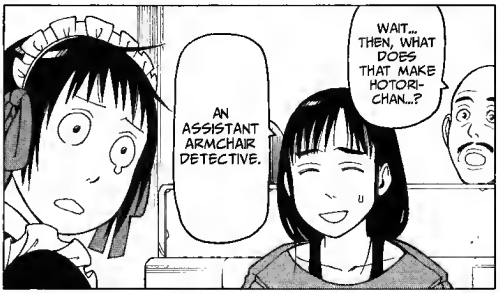
...OF THE CASE I RE-CENTLY SOLVED!
THEN, LISTEN TO MY STORY...
OKAY...
NOW, NOW, IT'S ALREADY BEEN SOLVED, SO DON'T WORRY OVER SMALL DETAILS.

SHIZUKA-NEECHAN, YOU MAY BE THE "POLICE DETECTIVE TYPE" THAT GOES TO THE SCENE AND SOLVES CASES ON FOOT...
...BUT I'M MORE OF AN "ARM-CHAIR DETECTIVE" TYPE.
WHAT'S AN "ARM-CHAIR DETECTIVE"?
PUT SIMPLY, IT MEANS ONE WHO REASONS OUT A CASE...
...WITH JUST DATA AND INFORMATION, ALL WHILE REMAINING SEATED AND NOT LEAVING THE ROOM.
OH... SO THEY'RE LIKE SOMEONE AT A KOTATSU WITH STUFF PILED AROUND THEM.
HOTORI-CHAN, LAZINESS WILL MAKE YOU FAT!
NO COMMENTS FROM THE PEANUT GALLERY!
AHEM.
THE CASE STARTED WITH A SINGLE PHONE CALL...

HUH? WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK?
LISTEN AS I DESCRIBE HOW I SPLENDIDLY SOLVED THE CASE!
...AND SO, JUST WHAT WAS THAT STRANGE WORLD THAT MY COUSIN MAKOTO-CHAN NEARLY GOT LOST IN?!
G-GEH!
THE "FIRST FLOOR" WAS REALLY THE SECOND FLOOR, RIGHT?
WHAT?! YOU DID?!
SORRY, I FIGURED IT OUT ALREADY.
WHAT DID YOU FIGURE OUT?
IT'S A SNOWY MOUNTAIN TRICK.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HUH? THAT WAS THE ANSWER?





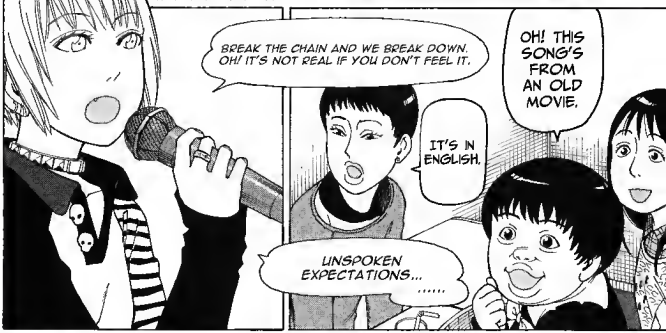


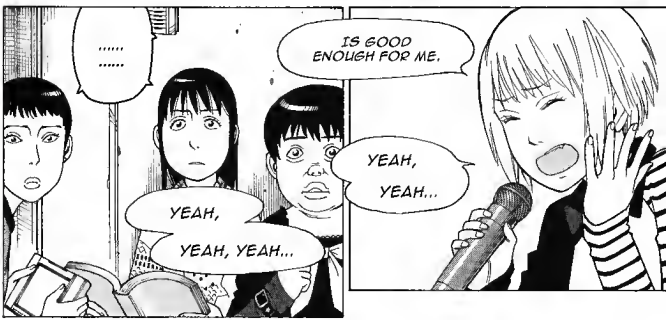
CHAPTER 93 / END

HARIBARA-SAN'S FAVORITE FOODS
MACARONS
FRUIT TEA
BLT SANDWICHES
WING TIPS
QUICHE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "A SHAME"?!
YEAH, WHAT A SHAME!
THE WING TIPS DON'T BELONG, DO THEY?

CHAPTER 94
A·KO·GA·RE LONGING

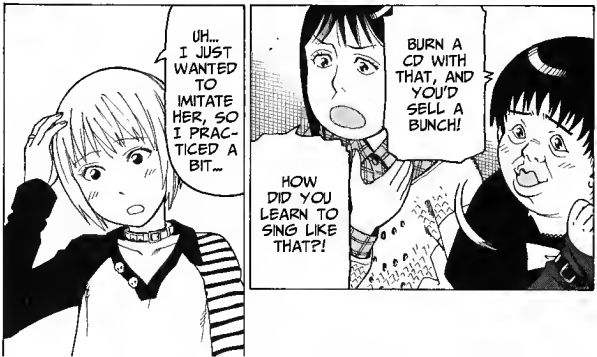
SIGN: KARAOKE JODEL


BREAK THE CHAIN AND WE BREAK DOWN. OH! IT'S NOT REAL IF YOU DON'T FEEL IT.
OH! THIS SONG'S FROM AN OLD MOVIE.
TV
IT'S IN ENGLISH.
UNSPOKEN EXPECTATIONS...
.....

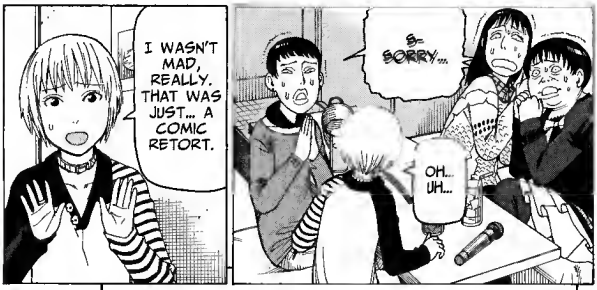


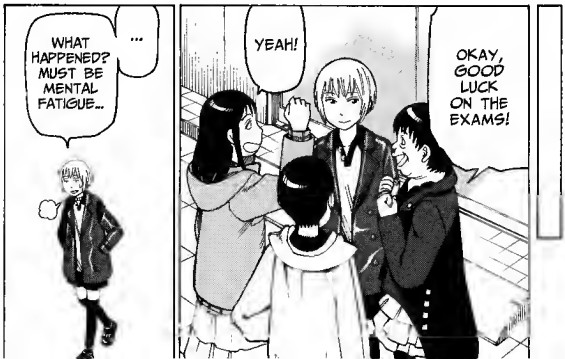
POSTER: PILES OF FRIES

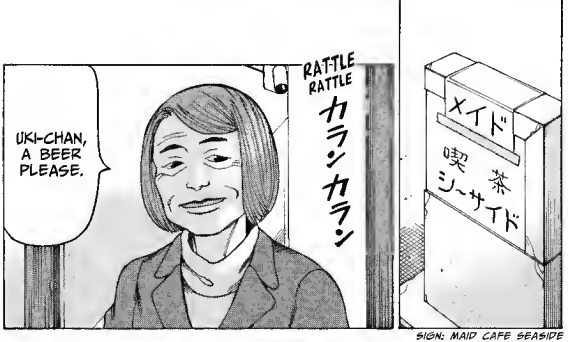
I STILL HAVE GOOSE-BUMPS!
NO, YOU'RE EVEN PAST THE POINT WHERE WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY WHETHER YOU'RE GOOD OR NOT!
YOU'RE JUST TOO GOOD!
NO WAY, NO WAY!


UH... I JUST WANTED TO IMITATE HER, SO I PRAC-TICED A BIT...
HOW DID YOU LEARN TO SING LIKE THAT?!
BURN A CD WITH THAT, AND YOU'D SELL A BUNCH!

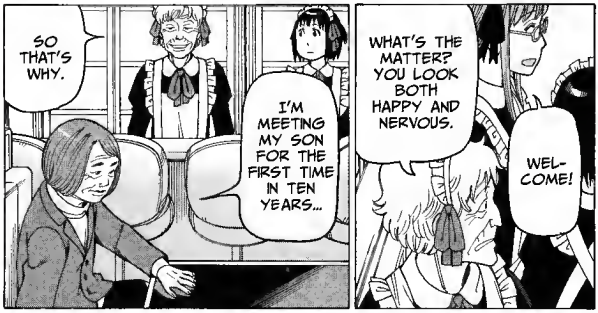
!
QUIT THAT "BY YOURSELF" STUFF!
WOW, BY YOURSELF?! NOT WITH ANY LESSONS, JUST ALL BY YOURSELF?


I WASN'T MAD, REALLY. THAT WAS JUST... A COMIC RETORT.
S-SORRY...
OH... UH...


...
WHAT HAPPENED? MUST BE MENTAL FATIGUE...
YEAH!
OKAY, GOOD LUCK ON THE EXAMS!



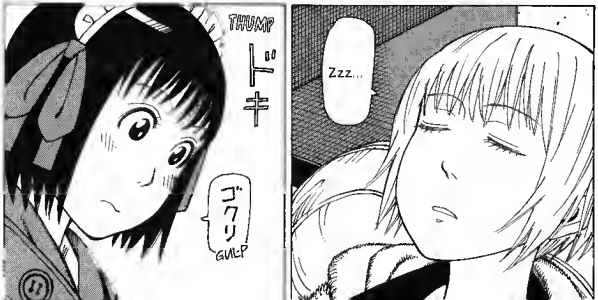
SIGN: MAID CAFE SEASIDE

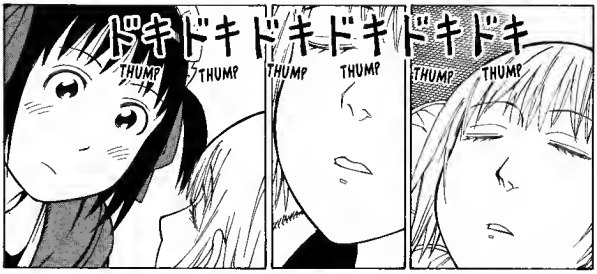


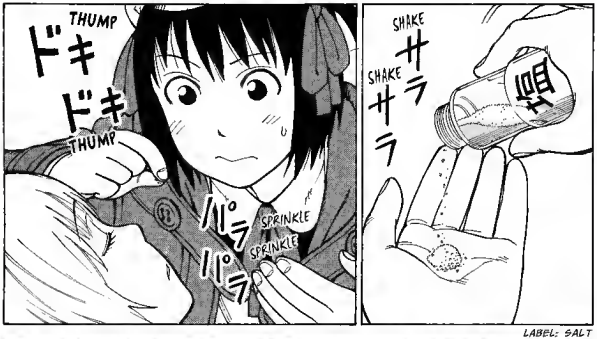
I'LL GIVE YOU A TAP WHENEVER I CATCH YOU LOSING THAT EXPRESSION.
GOOD IDEA!
I'LL MAKE THIS FACE SO YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT I'M THINKING.
SCARY...
WHEN YOU GET TO BE AN OLD WOMAN, YOU CAN TELL A LOT BY LOOKING AT SOMEONE'S FACE.
AMAZ-ING, CHIEF MAID.

WE DON'T GET ALONG POORLY, BUT THAT BOY JUST WON'T COME NEAR THE HOUSE...
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN TEN YEARS.
YOU COULD MEET AT YOUR OWN HOME.
WE'VE ARRANGED TO MEET HERE, SO BRING HIM SOME CURRY WHEN HE ARRIVES.
YOU'RE FINALLY MEETING HIM AGAIN. DO IT SOBER.
A JAB, YOU MEAN. JAB.
I THINK I'LL START OUR TALK WITH A LIGHT UPPERCUT.
MY SON IS...
WHO ARE YOU CONFUSING HIM WITH?
MAKE BOOMERANGS AND SELL THEM ON THE STREETS?
WHAT DOES YOUR SON DO, AGAIN?

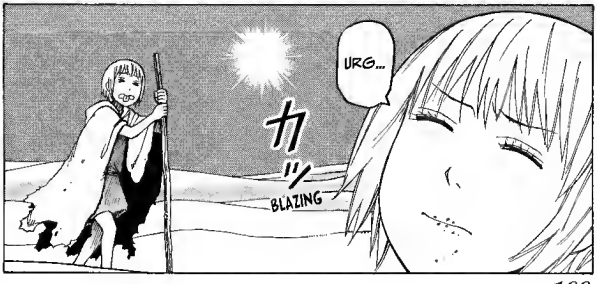
BUILDING: KAWAI APARTMENTS




ドキドキドキドキドキドキ
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP


THUMP
ドキ
ドキ
THUMP
パラ
パラ
SPRINKLE
SPRINKLE
SHAKE
サラ
SHAKE
サラ
塩

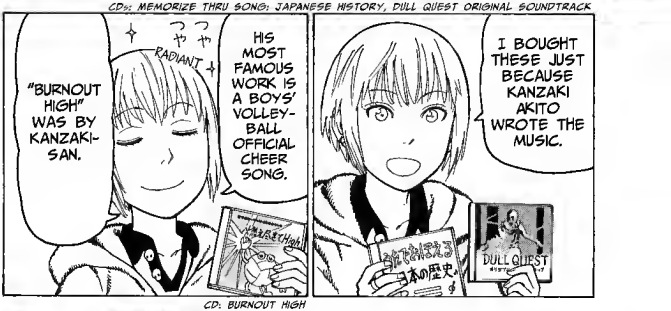
LABEL: SALT


URG...
カッ
BLAZING

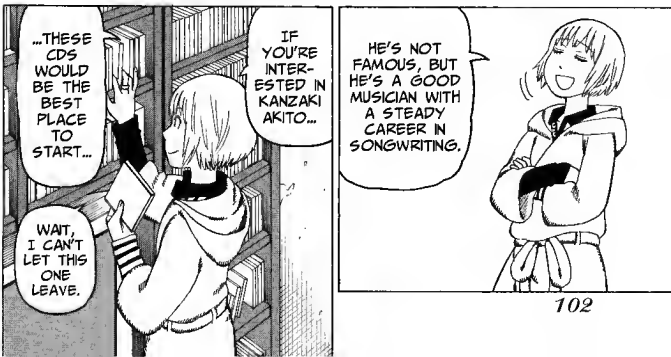
AB-PUH-PUH!
GOOD MORON-ING, SENPAI!
IF THAT WERE POISON, YOU'D BE DEAD BY NOW.
HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?!
YOU DIDN'T LOCK THE DOOR...
WHY'D YOU FEED ME SALT?!
WITH YOUR LOW BLOOD PRESSURE, I THOUGHT IT'D WAKE YOU UP...
BY THE WAY...
...DO YOU KNOW A KANZAKI AKITO?
OH.
DANG! I NEVER IMAGINED I'D HEAR YOU NAME-DROP A MANIAC LIKE HIM!
KANZAKI AKITO USED TO PLAY THE SYNTHS...
...IN A SEMI-POPULAR BAND, ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO.

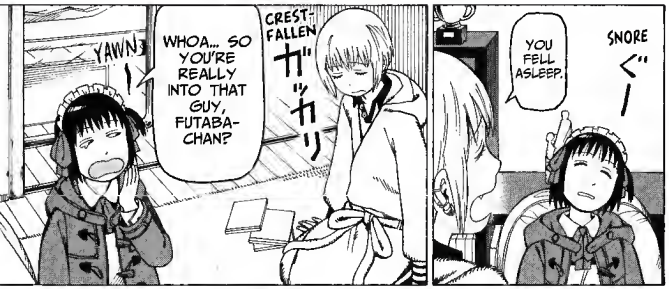
HE WAS A REAL SCENE-SHIFTING MUSICIAN, EVEN COMPOSED SONGS FOR MUSICALS.
HE'D BE ABOUT 45 YEARS OLD NOW.
AFTER THE BAND BROKE UP, HE WROTE SONGS FOR IDOLS AS A SOLO CAREER.

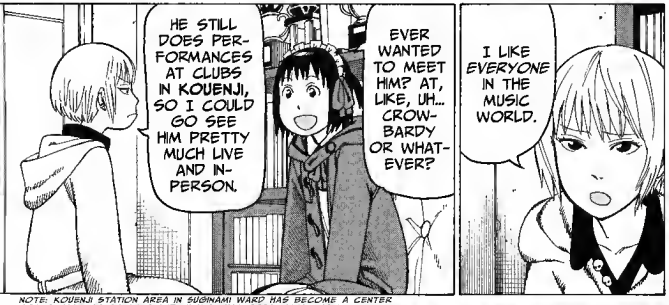
CDs: MEMORIZE THRU SONG: JAPANESE HISTORY, DULL QUEST ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK


"BURNOUT HIGH" WAS BY KANZAKI-SAN.
つや つや RADIANT
HIS MOST FAMOUS WORK IS A BOYS' VOLLEY-BALL OFFICIAL CHEER SONG.
I BOUGHT THESE JUST BECAUSE KANZAKI AKITO WROTE THE MUSIC.
DULL QUEST

CD: BURNOUT HIGH

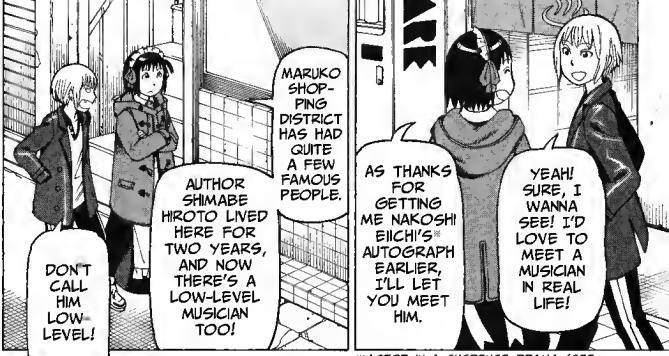

...THESE CDS WOULD BE THE BEST PLACE TO START...
WAIT, I CAN'T LET THIS ONE LEAVE.
IF YOU'RE INTER-ESTED IN KANZAKI AKITO...
HE'S NOT FAMOUS, BUT HE'S A GOOD MUSICIAN WITH A STEADY CAREER IN SONGWRITING.



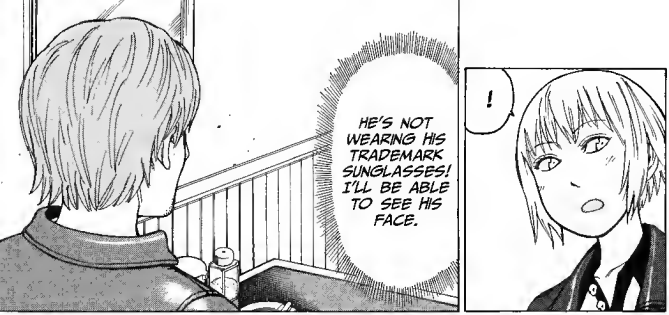

HE STILL DOES PER-FORMANCES AT CLUBS IN KOUENJI, SO I COULD GO SEE HIM PRETTY MUCH LIVE AND IN-PERSON.
EVER WANTED TO MEET HIM? AT, LIKE, UH... CROW-BARDY OR WHAT-EVER?
I LIKE EVERYONE IN THE MUSIC WORLD.

NOTE: KOUENJI STATION AREA IN SUGINAMI WARD HAS BECOME A CENTER FOR SMALL RESTAURANTS AND CLUBS THAT OFFER LIVE MUSIC

BUILDING: KAWAI APARTMENTS

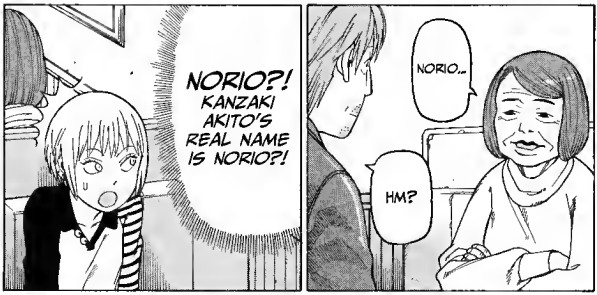

YEAH! SURE, I WANNA SEE! I'D LOVE TO MEET A MUSICIAN IN REAL LIFE!
AS THANKS FOR GETTING ME NAKOSHI EIICHI'S※ AUTOGRAPH EARLIER, I'LL LET YOU MEET HIM.
MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT HAS HAD QUITE A FEW FAMOUS PEOPLE.
AUTHOR SHIMABE HIROTO LIVED HERE FOR TWO YEARS, AND NOW THERE'S A LOW-LEVEL MUSICIAN TOO!
DON'T CALL HIM LOW-LEVEL!

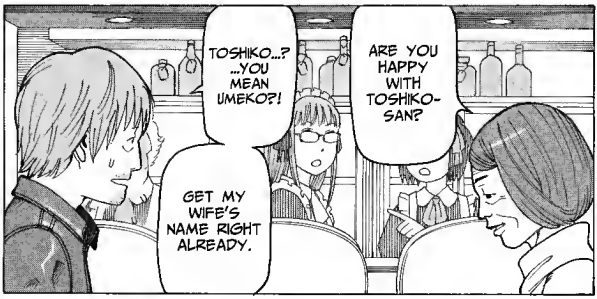
※ACTOR IN A SUSPENSE DRAMA (SEE VOLUME 11'S "THE FINAL MYSTERY")

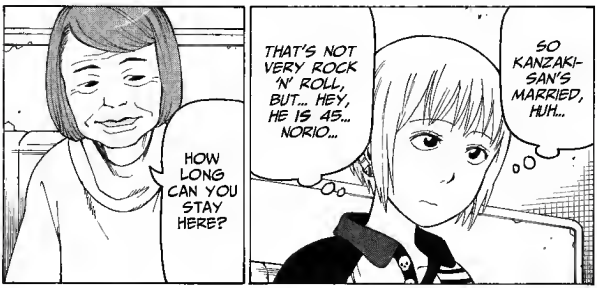

HE'S NOT WEARING HIS TRADEMARK SUNGLASSES! I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE HIS FACE.
!

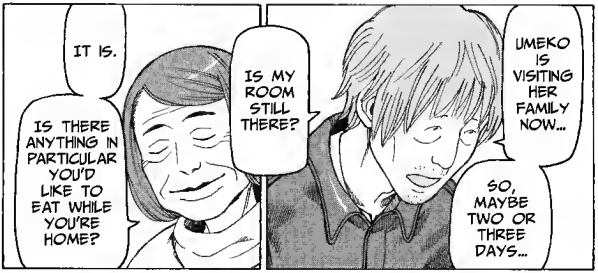
WHOA!! HE'S PLAIN!!

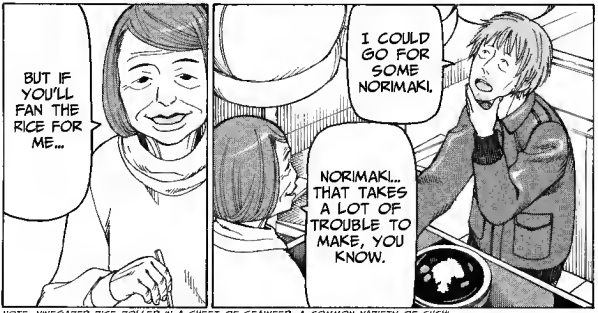
I THOUGHT YOU WERE JOKING, MOM.
SO THIS PLACE REALLY DID BECOME A MAID CAFE.
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!


NORIO?!
KANZAKI AKITO'S REAL NAME IS NORIO?!
NORIO...
HM?

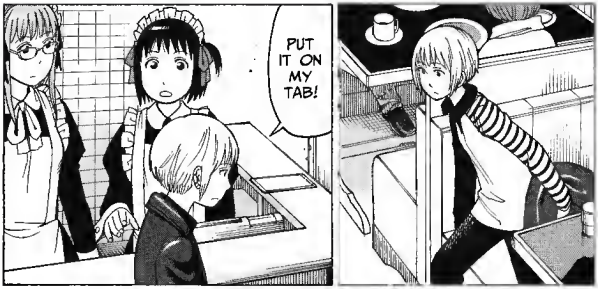

TOSHIKO...? ...YOU MEAN UMEKO?!
ARE YOU HAPPY WITH TOSHIKO-SAN?
GET MY WIFE'S NAME RIGHT ALREADY.

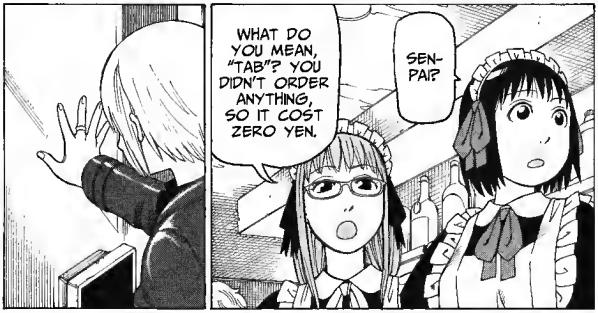

HOW LONG CAN YOU STAY HERE?
THAT'S NOT VERY ROCK 'N' ROLL, BUT... HEY, HE IS 45... NORIO...
SO KANZAKI-SAN'S MARRIED, HUH...


UMEKO IS VISITING HER FAMILY NOW...
SO, MAYBE TWO OR THREE DAYS...
IS MY ROOM STILL THERE?
IT IS.
IS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR YOU'D LIKE TO EAT WHILE YOU'RE HOME?



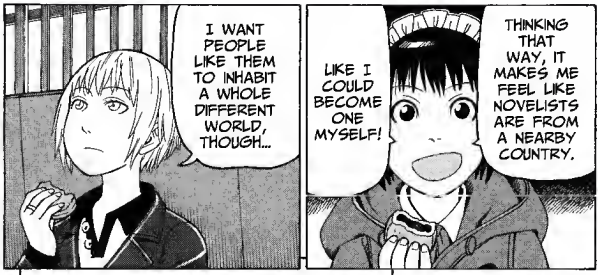
NOTE: VINEGARED RICE ROLLED IN A SHEET OF SEAWEED, A COMMON VARIETY OF SUSHI





SIGN:
MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT

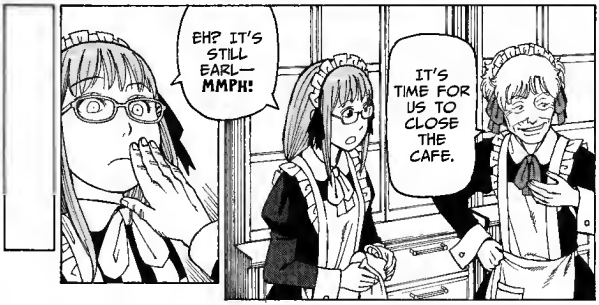
NOTE: FILLED PANCAKE-LIKE TREAT SHAPED LIKE A GIANT COIN


I WANT PEOPLE LIKE THEM TO INHABIT A WHOLE DIFFERENT WORLD, THOUGH...
LIKE I COULD BECOME ONE MYSELF!
THINKING THAT WAY, IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE NOVELISTS ARE FROM A NEARBY COUNTRY.

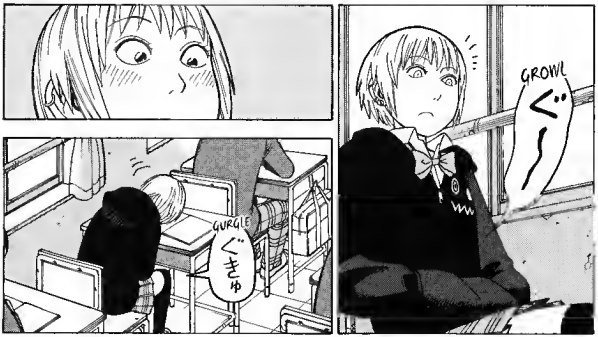
SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

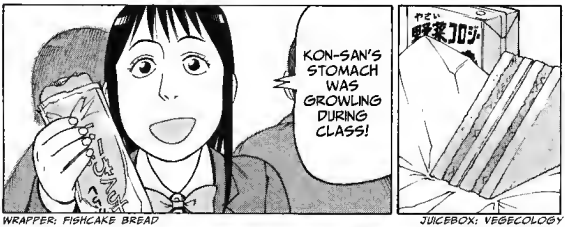
THEY'RE IN A WHOLE DIFFERENT WORLD.
ARE YOU KIDDING?! THAT'S DONE BY PEOPLE IN THE CELESTIAL REALM!
LIKE, SAY...
...MUSIC FOR GHIBLI FILMS.

NOW, THEN...
YOU CAN CONTINUE YOUR CATCHING-UP AT HOME.


EH? IT'S STILL EARL— MMPH!
IT'S TIME FOR US TO CLOSE THE CAFE.

I'M GETTING HUNGRY...





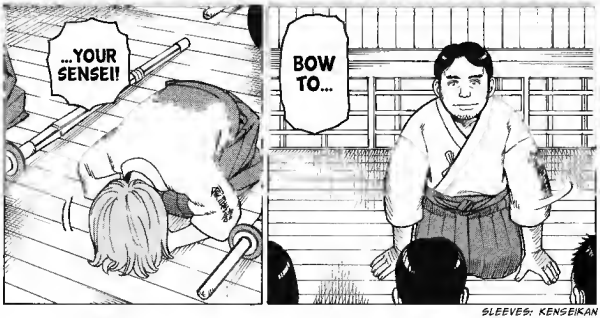
WRAPPER: FISHCAKE BREAD

JUICEBOX: VEGECOLOGY

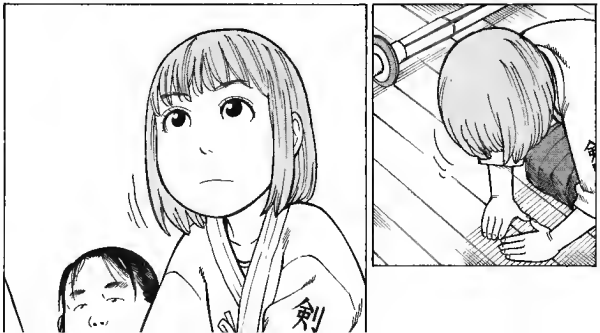
CHAPTER 94 / END

SIGN: KENDO DOJO KENSEIKAN

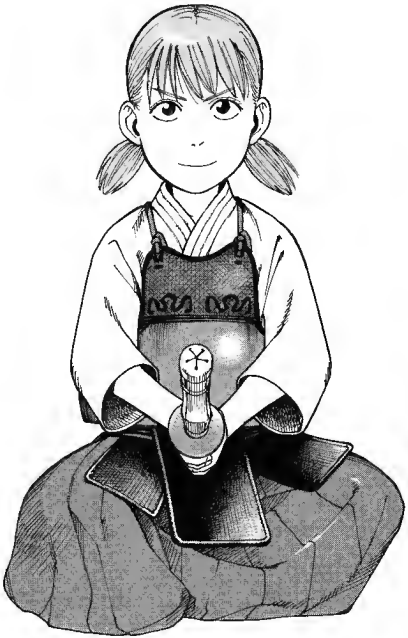
CHAPTER 95



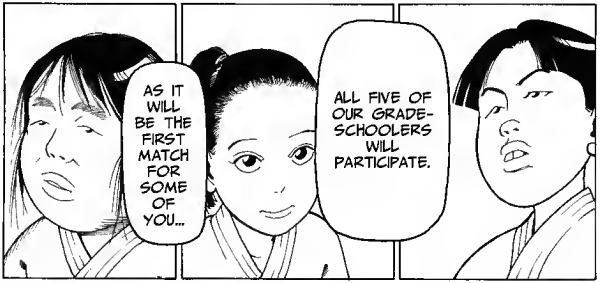
SLEEVES: KENSEIKAN



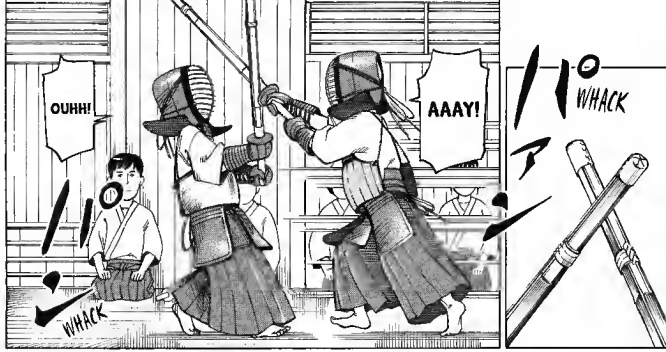
CHAPTER 95 YUKIKO'S SWORDSMANSHIP

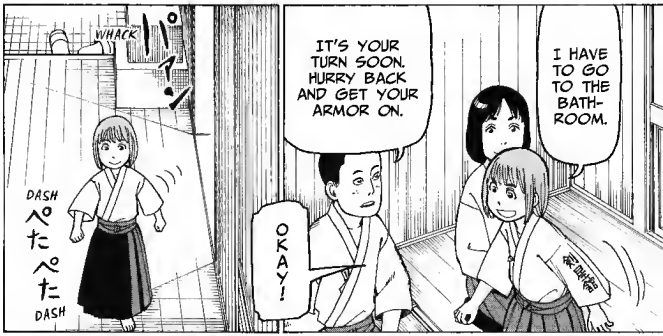


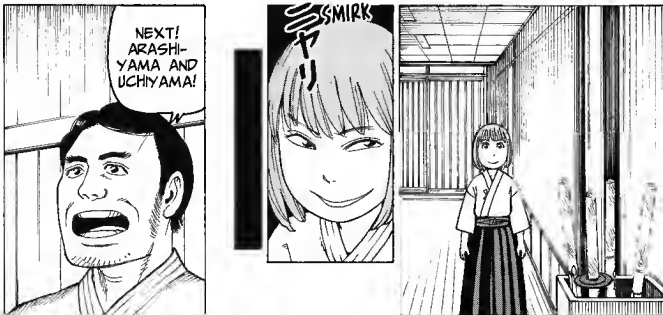
...AGAINST CHILDREN FROM OTHER DOJOS IN OHTA WARD.
NEXT SUNDAY, OUR GRADE SCHOOL SECTION WILL HAVE A PRACTICE MATCH...


AS IT WILL BE THE FIRST MATCH FOR SOME OF YOU...
ALL FIVE OF OUR GRADE-SCHOOLERS WILL PARTICIPATE.

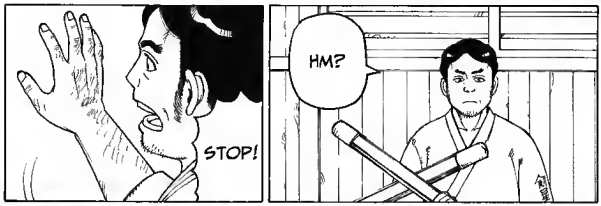
SO, TODAY WE'LL HAVE TWO-PERSON SINGLE-POINT MATCHES TO PREPARE YOU FOR THE PRACTICE MATCH.
...THIS SHOULD BE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO LEARN WHAT THEY ARE LIKE.


OUHH!
AAAY!
WHACK
WHACK

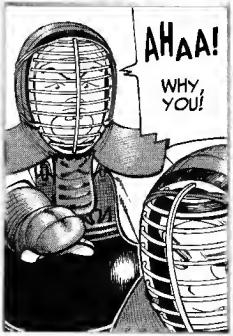

WHACK
DASH
ペたペた
DASH
IT'S YOUR TURN SOON. HURRY BACK AND GET YOUR ARMOR ON.
OKAY!
I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATH-ROOM.


NEXT! ARASHI-YAMA AND UCHIYAMA!
SMIRK

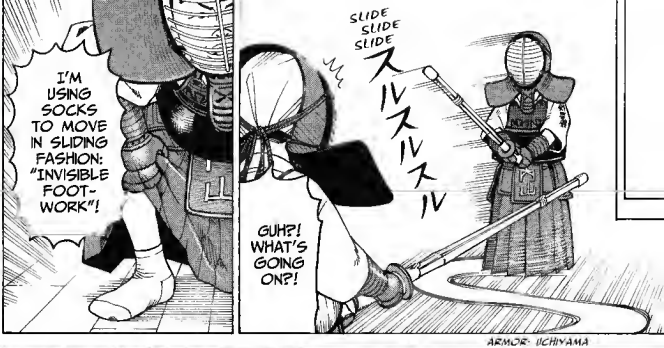
BEGIN!
OUHH OUHH!
THRUST
URG?!
HI-YAAHH!
...CAN'T GET WITHIN FIGHTING DISTANCE OF A TEENY GIRL WHO JUST STARTED THIS YEAR...?!
I, UCHIYAMA, WITH ONE YEAR AND TWO MONTHS OF KENDO EXPERIENCE...
WHAT IS THIS...?!



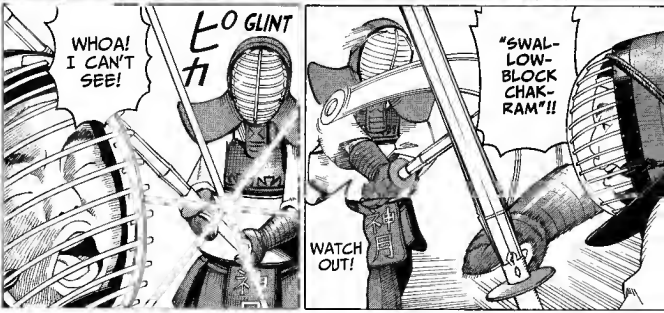
SHINAI: BAMBOO SWORD USED IN KENDO



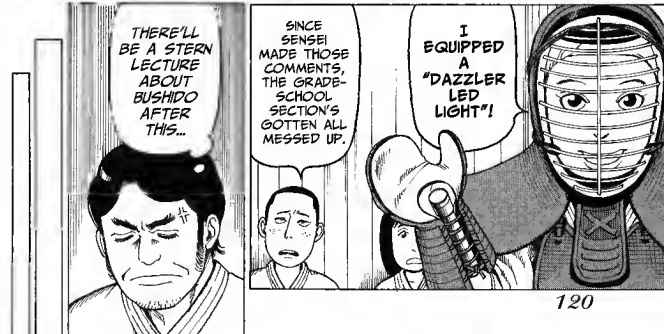
BOO!
BOO!
THAT'S DIRTY!
THAT'S NOT FAIR!
...PRETENDED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM, AND PICKED UP AN ADULT-SIZED SHINAI?
THAT GIRL...
IT'S ALSO SAID THAT MIYAMOTO MUSASHI USED AN OAR IN PLACE OF A WOODEN SWORD DURING HIS DUEL WITH KOUJIROU, IN ORDER TO DISRUPT THAT ADVANTAGE.
IT'S SAID THAT THE MASTER SWORDSMAN, SASAKI KOUJIROU, WOULD USE AN EXTRA-LONG SWORD IN ORDER TO WIN.
NOW, SETTLE DOWN.
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS... YOU SAID IT, SO WE'RE GOING WITH IT.
I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT THIS IS A SIGN OF ARASHIYAMA'S DRIVE TO WIN.



ARMOR: ICHIYAMA



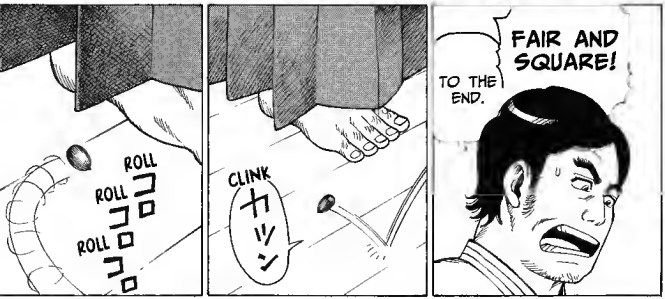
ARMOR: KOUZUKI

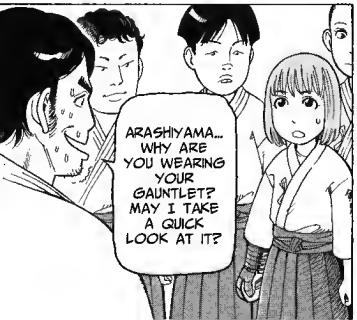

THERE'LL BE A STERN LECTURE ABOUT BUSHIDO AFTER THIS...
SINCE SENSEI MADE THOSE COMMENTS, THE GRADE-SCHOOL SECTION'S GOTTEN ALL MESSED UP.
I EQUIPPED A "DAZZLER LED LIGHT"!

THAT'S THE VERY FIRST ONE.
WOW, YOU'RE THE VAN-GUARD, YUKIKO?
OR DID THEY JUST PUT HER FIRST TO LIVEN THINGS UP, BECAUSE SHE'S SO CHEERFUL?
IS SHE AMAZING?
AM I AMAZ-ING?!
Can do
UH... YEAH?
I THINK I'LL COME CHEER YOU ON.
ALL RIGHT!!
Can do
SWISH
SWISH

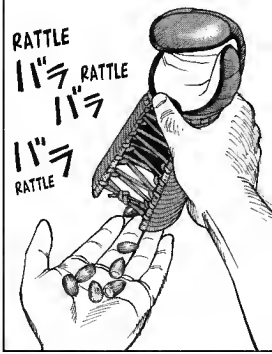
MURMUR
ザワ
ザワ
MURMUR
ザワ
MURMUR
SUNDAY
SORRY I MADE YOU COME ALONG.
IT'S FINE. I CAME BECAUSE I WANTED TO.
I LOVE WATCHING SPORTS MATCHES, NO MATTER THE TYPE.
THIS FEELING IS... SEETHING.
Basis
WAH... WAAHHH!
NO! I WANNA GO HOME!
NOW, JUST DO YOUR BEST...
I'LL BE WATCHING YOU.

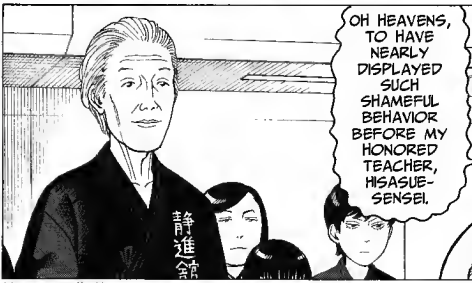
BECAUSE FOUR DOJOS ARE HERE TODAY, INCLUDING US...
剣星舘
...IF WE WIN ONE ROUND, WE'LL BE IN THE FINAL; OTHERWISE, WE'LL PLAY OFF FOR THIRD PLACE.
EITHER WAY, WE WILL HAVE TWO ROUNDS OF MATCHES! FIGHT FAIR AND SQUARE, TAKE IT EASY, AND HAVE FUN!
RIGHT!


FAIR AND SQUARE!
TO THE END.
CLINK
カツン
ROLL
コロ
ROLL
コロ
ROLL
コロ


ARASHIYAMA... WHY ARE YOU WEARING YOUR GAUNTLET? MAY I TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT IT?

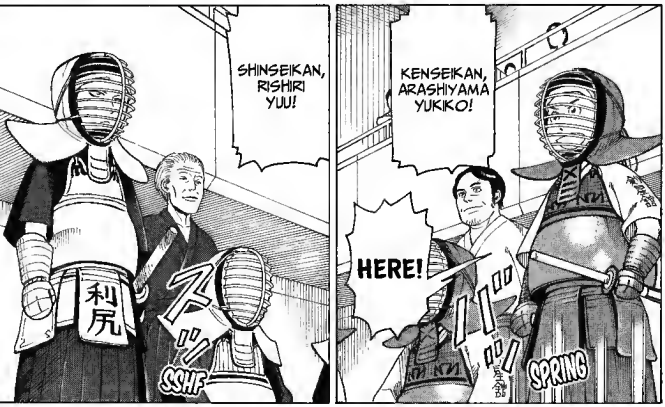
THANK GOODNESS I NOTICED BEFORE WE BEGAN... THANK GOODNESS...
DON'T TELL ME YOU WERE PLANNING TO SCATTER THESE ACORNS DURING THE MATCH...



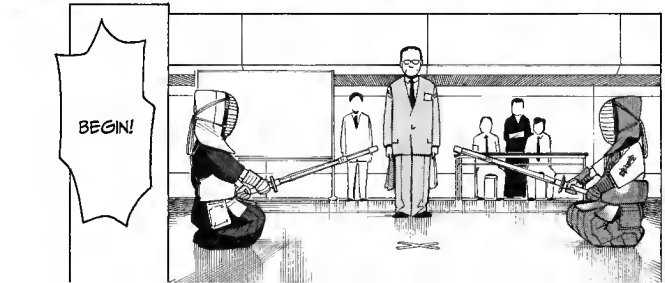


JACKET: SEISHINKAN

THE ROUND WILL CONSIST OF FIVE-MINUTE ONE-POINT MATCHES.
WELL THEN, WE WILL BEGIN THE ROUND BETWEEN KENSEIKAN AND SEISHINKAN.

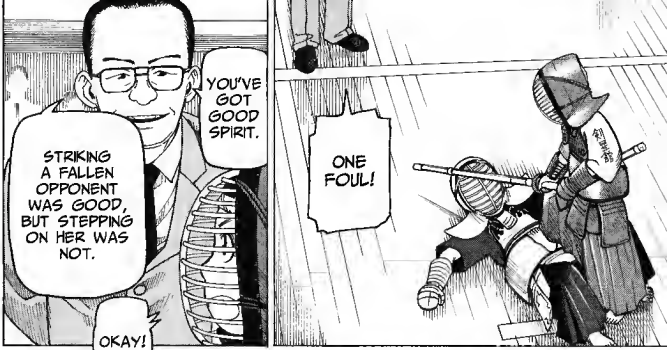


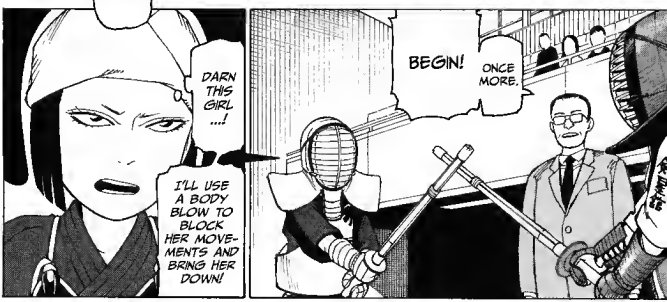
ARMOR: RISHIRI

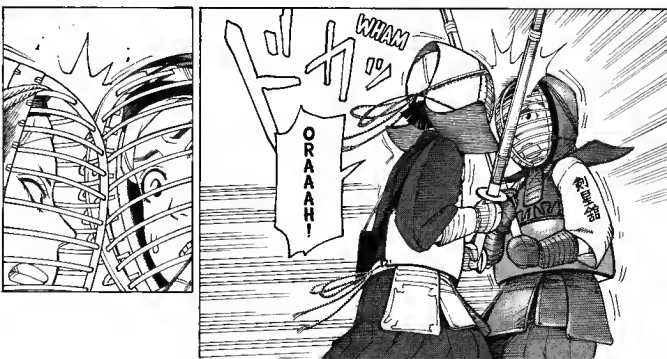


I SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIN IF I DO IT LIKE IN PRAC-TICE!
FOCUS ON THEIR CENTER! NOTE THE START OF A TECH-NIQUE!
THRUST
DORRRAAAAHH!
SNAP
バキガン
WHAM
HEY!
WHAT'S WITH THIS GIRL?! SHE HAS NONE OF THE FUNDAMENTALS...

NOTE: IN KENDO, YOU MUST YELL OUT THE ARMORED TARGET OF A STRIKE IN ORDER FOR IT TO COUNT AS A POINT. MEN FOR HELMET, KOTE FOR WRIST, GHUN FOR CHEST PLATE


YOU'VE GOT GOOD SPIRIT.
STRIKING A FALLEN OPPONENT WAS GOOD, BUT STEPPING ON HER WAS NOT.
OKAY!
ONE FOUL!

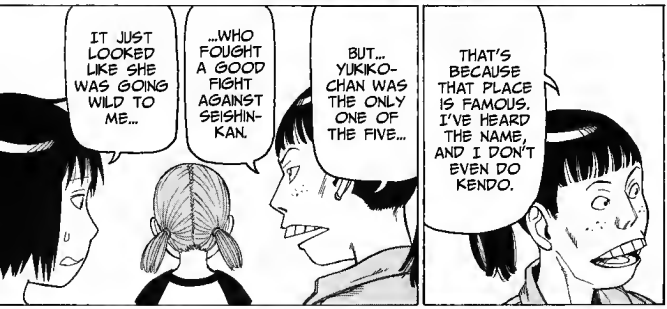

DARN THIS GIRL ....!
I'LL USE A BODY BLOW TO BLOCK HER MOVEMENTS AND BRING HER DOWN!
BEGIN!
ONCE MORE.


WHAM
ORAAAH!

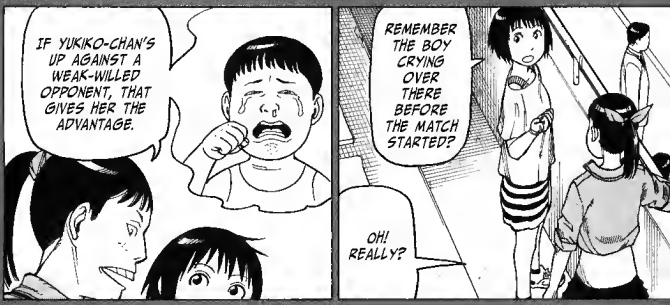
HIKI-MEN: HELMET STRIKE DONE WHILE MOVING BACKWARDS

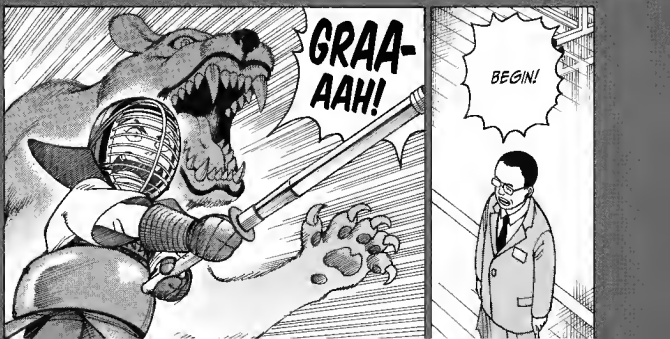
ONE POINT!
OUT OF BOUNDS!
I WON!
NO... YOU LOST.
IF THAT HAD BEEN A DUEL WITH SWORDS, YOU'D HAVE WON.
SHE HAD ONE FOUL AND ONE OUT-OF-BOUNDS, SO HER OPPONENT GOT THE POINT.
D-DID SHE WIN?!
?
O。

SIGN: LIGHT MEALS - HEAVY MEALS


IT JUST LOOKED LIKE SHE WAS GOING WILD TO ME...
...WHO FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT AGAINST SEISHIN-KAN.
BUT... YUKIKO-CHAN WAS THE ONLY ONE OF THE FIVE...
THAT'S BECAUSE THAT PLACE IS FAMOUS. I'VE HEARD THE NAME, AND I DON'T EVEN DO KENDO.

KENSEI-KAN, ARASHI-YAMA YUKIKO!
HERE!
FUUJINKAI, ENOMOTO KENGO.
OH, MY. YUKIKO'S NEXT OPPONENT IS THAT KID.
YOU KNOW HIM?

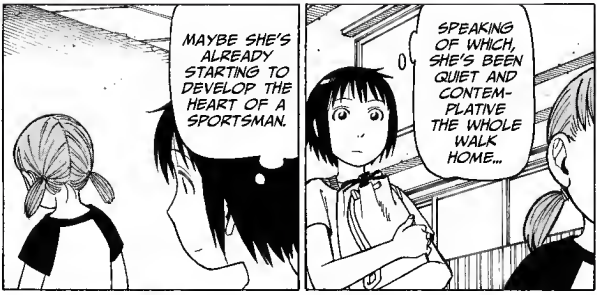

REMEMBER THE BOY CRYING OVER THERE BEFORE THE MATCH STARTED?
OH! REALLY?
IF YUKIKO-CHAN'S UP AGAINST A WEAK-WILLED OPPONENT, THAT GIVES HER THE ADVANTAGE.

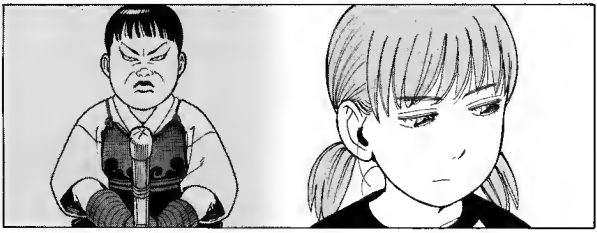

BEGIN!
GRAA-AAH!

KOTE!
MEN!
SMACK
SMACK
ARMOR: ENDOMOTO

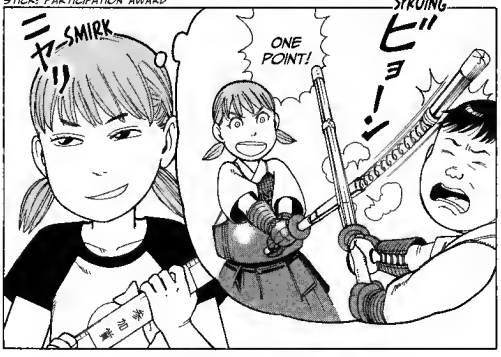
ドン
SHOCKING
A MASTER!
THAT KID LOOKED REALLY COOL!
HE'S BOUND TO BE A FAMOUS SWORDSMAN SOMEDAY.
BUT YUKIKO-CHAN PROBABLY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WINNING AND LOSING YET.

RIGHT NOW, SHE'S JUST WAVING AROUND A STICK...
IT'S LOTS OF FUN, BUT... FROM NOW ON, SHE'LL LEARN.
THE JOY YOU HAVE WHEN YOU WIN...
..NOT BY COINCI-DENCE, BUT THROUGH EFFORT....
...AND THE REGRET FROM LOSING BY ONLY A SMALL MARGIN!
ALL BECAUSE YOU HADN'T TAKEN JUST ONE MORE HALF-STEP...
...THE WIN NEARLY WITHIN YOUR GRASP GOT SNATCHED AWAY. THAT FEELING OF AGONY!
THOSE MOMENTS WHEN THE FEELING OF WINNING AND LOSING BECAME REAL TO ME...
...WILL NEVER FADE!
I SEE...
TODAY AND TONIGHT MAY BE LIKE THAT FOR HER.


MAYBE SHE'S ALREADY STARTING TO DEVELOP THE HEART OF A SPORTSMAN.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, SHE'S BEEN QUIET AND CONTEMPLATIVE THE WHOLE WALK HOME...

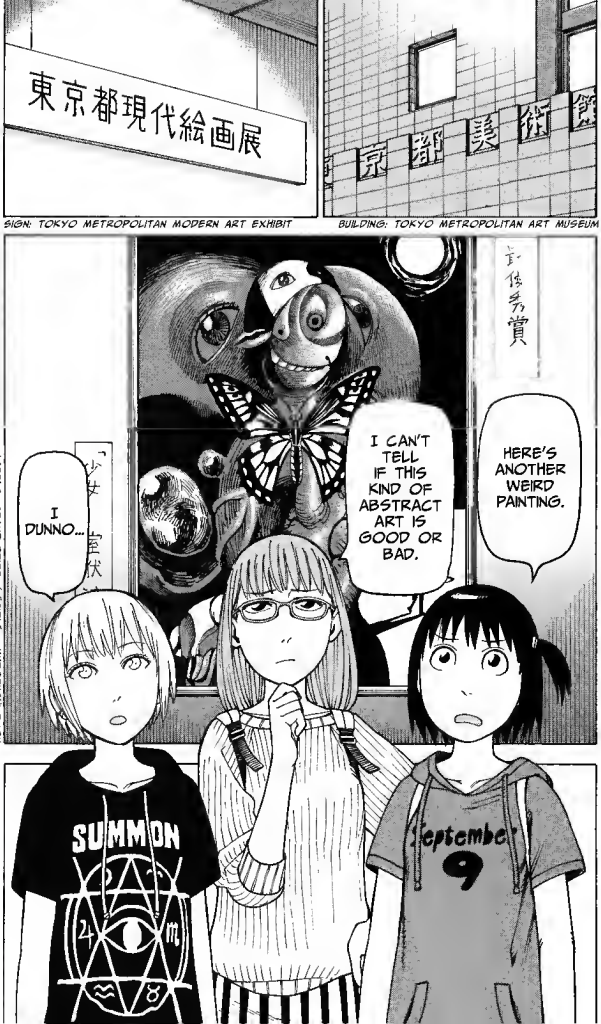


STICK: PARTICIPATION AWARD



CHAPTER 95 / END

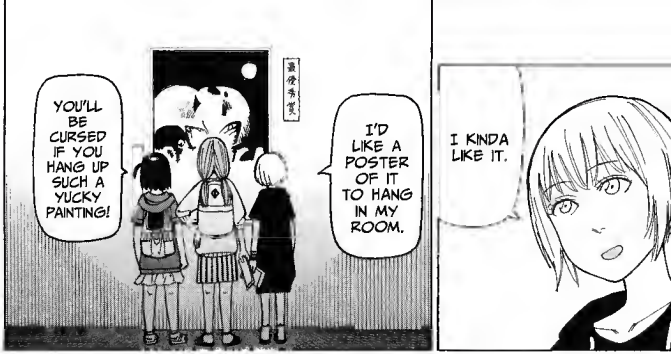
CHAPTER 96



SIGN: TOKYO METROPOLITAN MODERN ART EXHIBIT

BUILDING: TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM

LABELS: GRAND PRIZE / "GIRL" - MUROFUSHI RYOU


I KINDA LIKE IT.
I'D LIKE A POSTER OF IT TO HANG IN MY ROOM.
YOU'LL BE CURSED IF YOU HANG UP SUCH A YUCKY PAINTING!

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE'VE SEEN THEM ALL FROM START TO FINISH...
BUT NONE LIKE YOURS.

THAT'S WEIRD...
NOW I'VE NO HOPE OF FINDING ANY CLUES...

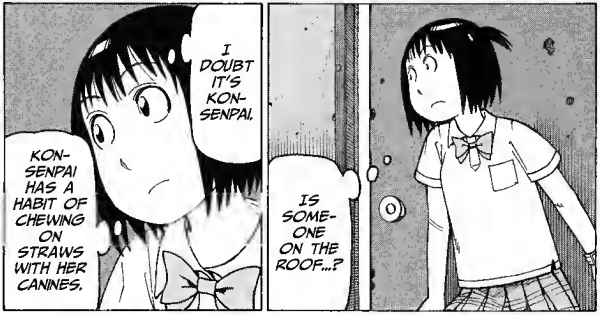
CHAPTER 96
GHOST PAINTING

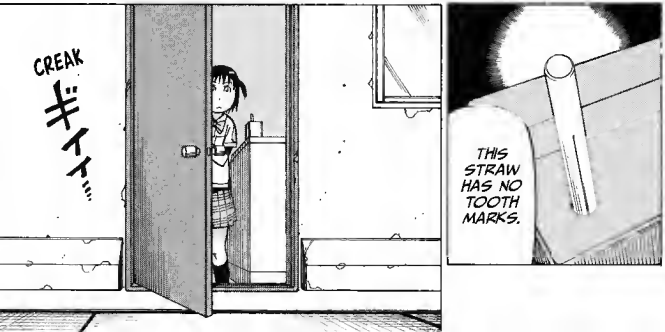
BZZZ
数学
補習
SIGN: REMEDIAL MATH
SHOULDN'T YOU BE ABLE TO SOLVE THESE BY NOW?!
GOING BACK IN TIME TO SUMMER BREAK...
BZZZ
I'M QUIZZING YOU ON THEM TOMORROW! "MATH IS DETECTIVE WORK"!
YEAH, YEAH. DANK YOU VERY MUCH...
WHEN YOU GET HOME, YOU NEED TO SOLVE THREE MORE AND LEARN THEM PERFECTLY.
I DID THREE WHOLE WORD PROBLEMS RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!
BZZZ
SAY, WHAT ARE YOUR SUMMER MEMO-RIES?
THEN STUDY HARDER IF YOU WANT TO AVOID THAT!
MAAAN... WHEN I GROW UP, IT'LL SUCK IF ALL OF MY SUMMER MEMORIES ARE ABOUT "REMEDIAL CLASS"...

BZT...
SURF-ING.
.....
.....
.....
THAT WAS A JOKE.
.....
.....
"CRIMINAL-LY"...?
SLAM
パタン
QUIT MAKING CRIMI-NALLY STRESS-FUL LIES!

BZZZ
OUTSIDE OF REMEDIAL CLASS, I LIKE HAVING THE SCHOOL BUILDING ALL TO MYSELF DURING SUMMER BREAK.
BZZZ
BZZZ
GUESS I'LL GO READ SOMEPLACE FOR ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE GOING HOME.
MAYBE THE ROOF-TOP LANDING.
HUH?
THE DOOR'S OPEN!
WHAT THE?

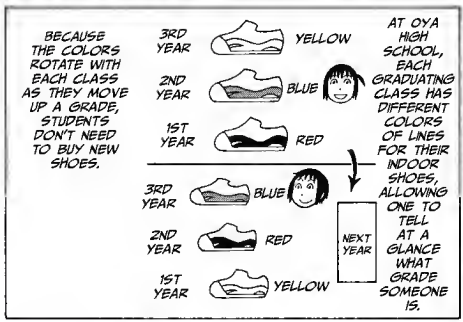
JUICEBOX: TOMATO LIFE





GEH, SHE'S SMOKING! IT'S A DELINQUENT!!

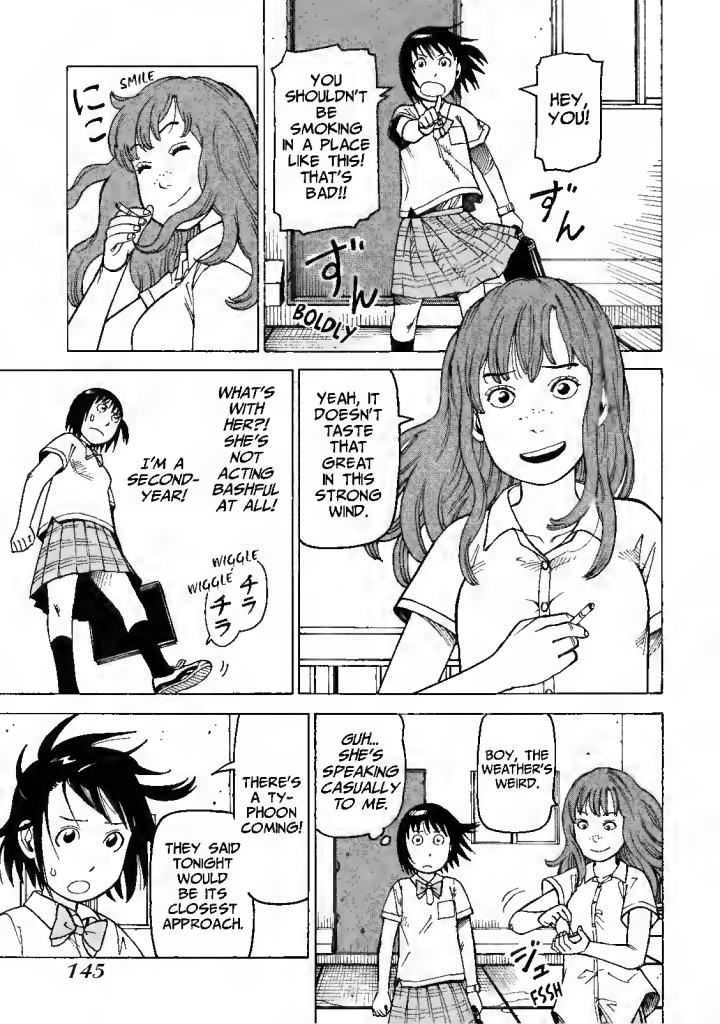
WHOOSHH
ウ
ウ
ビ
ュ


BECAUSE THE COLORS ROTATE WITH EACH CLASS AS THEY MOVE UP A GRADE, STUDENTS DON'T NEED TO BUY NEW SHOES.
3RD YEAR
YELLOW
2ND YEAR
BLUE
1ST YEAR
RED
3RD YEAR
BLUE
2ND YEAR
RED
1ST YEAR
YELLOW
NEXT YEAR
AT OYA HIGH SCHOOL, EACH GRADUATING CLASS HAS DIFFERENT COLORS OF LINES FOR THEIR INDOOR SHOES, ALLOWING ONE TO TELL AT A GLANCE WHAT GRADE SOMEONE IS.

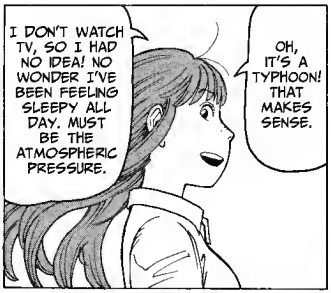
HOTORI QUIVERED A MOMENT, THEN CHECKED THE GIRL'S SHOES.

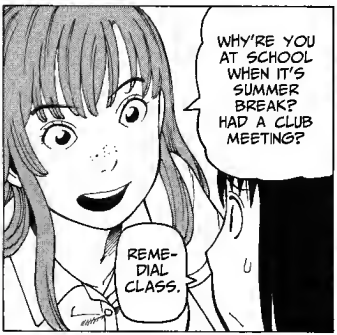
IN CONCLUSION, SECOND-YEAR HOTORI OUTRANKS THIS FIRST-YEAR GIRL.

HER SHOES HAVE RED LINES. SHE'S A FIRST-YEAR.


HEY, YOU!
ずん
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SMOKING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS! THAT'S BAD!!
ずん
BOLDLY
SMILE
にこ
YEAH, IT DOESN'T TASTE THAT GREAT IN THIS STRONG WIND.
WHAT'S WITH HER?! SHE'S NOT ACTING BASHFUL AT ALL!
I'M A SECOND-YEAR!
WIGGLE
WIGGLE
チラ
チラ
BOY, THE WEATHER'S WEIRD.
GUH.. SHE'S SPEAKING CASUALLY TO ME.
ジュ
ssss
THERE'S A TY-PHOON COMING!
THEY SAID TONIGHT WOULD BE ITS CLOSEST APPROACH.

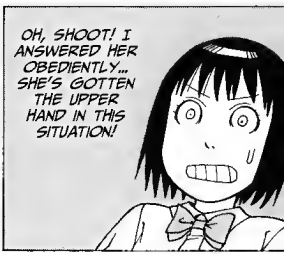
THAT'S WHAT MY DANGER-ALERT SYSTEM IS TELLING ME!
WHAT'S THIS...? IT FEELS LIKE I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THIS GIRL'S PACE... I SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HER.

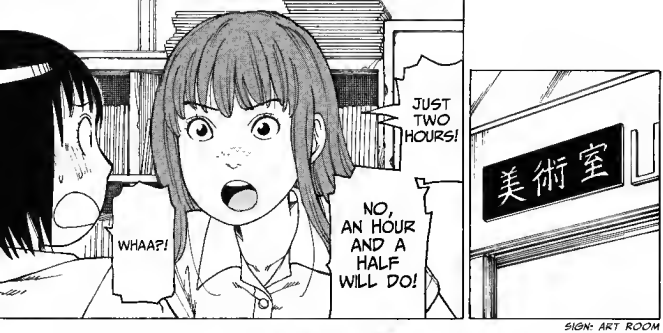

I DON'T WATCH TV, SO I HAD NO IDEA! NO WONDER I'VE BEEN FEELING SLEEPY ALL DAY. MUST BE THE ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE.
OH, IT'S A TYPHOON! THAT MAKES SENSE.


WHY'RE YOU AT SCHOOL WHEN IT'S SUMMER BREAK? HAD A CLUB MEETING?
REMEDIAL CLASS.

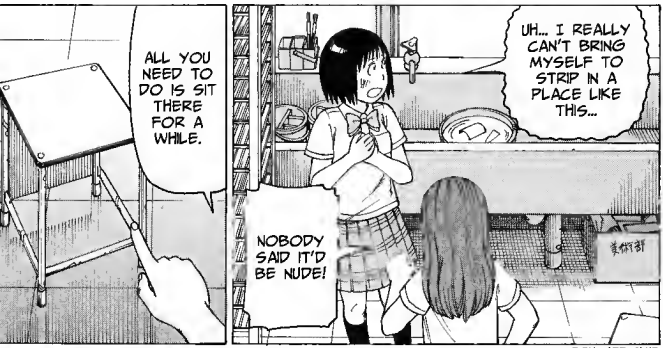
WELL... GUESS I'LL GO HOME.
HEY, WAIT!

WE MUST'VE MET HERE FOR A REASON.
HEY, YOU GOT A MO-MENT?
HUH? WHAT IS IT?

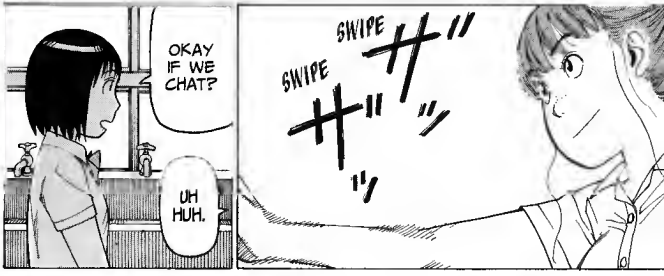

OH, SHOOT! I ANSWERED HER OBEDIENTLY... SHE'S GOTTEN THE UPPER HAND IN THIS SITUATION!

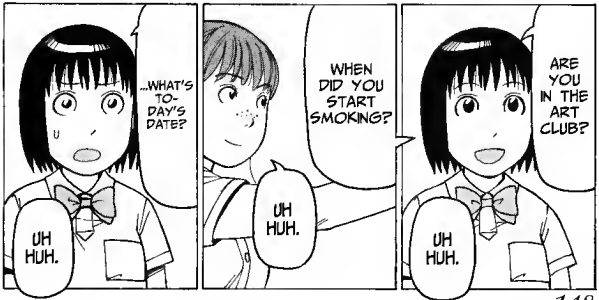


SIGN: ART ROOM


ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS SIT THERE FOR A WHILE.
NOBODY SAID IT'D BE NUDE!
UH... I REALLY CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO STRIP IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...
美術部

BOX: ART CLUB

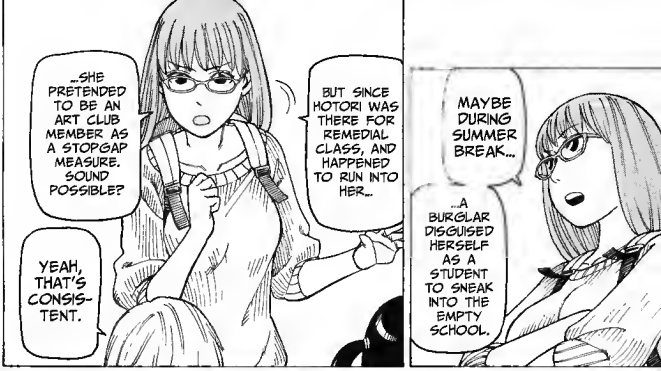

OKAY IF WE CHAT?
UH HUH.
SWIPE
SWIPE

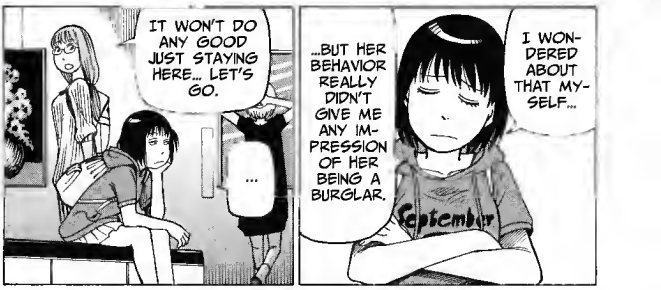

ARE YOU IN THE ART CLUB?
UH HUH.
WHEN DID YOU START SMOKING?
UH HUH.
...WHAT'S TO-DAY'S DATE?
UH HUH.

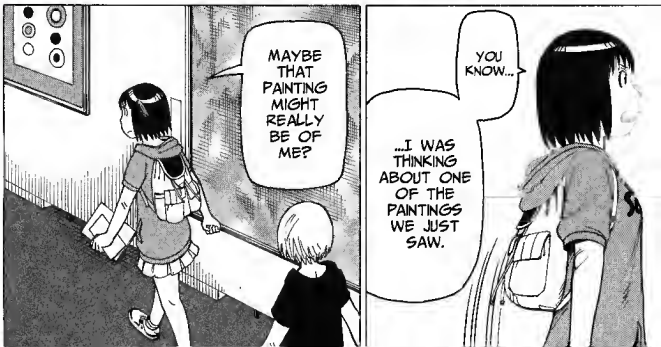
JUST MAKING VAGUE RESPONSES WHILE CONCENTRATING, HUH?
"DEAD OR DIE"?
DON'T BOTH MEAN DEATH?
!!
I'M GETTING HUNGRY...
GRrrr...
SEE?!
OKAY, THAT'S LONG ENOUGH.
IS IT DONE? SHOW ME.
NO, NOT YET!
GUESS I'LL PAINT THE REST WITHOUT A MODEL.
VOLUPTUOUS
VOLUPTUOUS

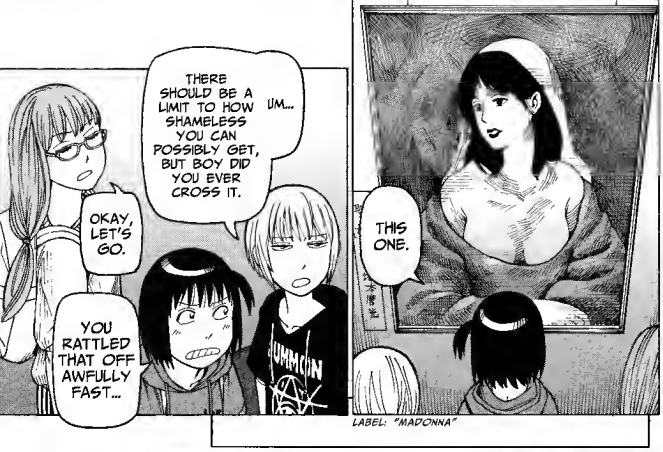
I'LL DISPLAY THE FINISHED PAINTING THERE.
COME TO THE TOKYO METROPOLITAN MODERN ART EXHIBIT IN SEPTEMBER.
VOLUPTUOUS
WHY THE HELL DIDN'T YOU ASK HER NAME?!
YOU DO THINGS LIKE THIS.
THIS IS TRULY A "SELF-STARTED MYSTERY."
"I AM ARASHIYAMA HOTORI! WHAT IS YOUR NAME?" ...HOW WOULD I BRING THAT UP?
YOU KNOW, I'M NOT THAT GOOD AT BREAKING INTO CONVERSATIONS WITH STUFF LIKE...
IT IS EVEN WEIRDER THAT YOU COULDN'T FIND HER FROM THOSE CLUES.
SHE'S A FIRST-YEAR IN THE ART CLUB AT THE SAME SCHOOL... I WAS SURE THAT'D NARROW IT DOWN ENOUGH...
IT'S JUST... I THOUGHT I'D FIND HER AGAIN RIGHT AWAY ONCE SUMMER BREAK WAS OVER...

...SO I TRIED WANDERING AROUND THE FIRST-YEAR BUILDING TO SEE IF I COULD PICK HER OUT FROM ALL THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS...
I DIS-COVERED SHE WASN'T IN THE ART CLUB...
LYNN'S SKETCHBOOK
THEN THE QUESTION BECOMES, "DID THE GIRL YOU MET THAT SUMMER DAY REALLY EXIST?!"
...NOR THE PAINTING EXIST...
IF NEITHER THE PAINTER...
September
A GHOST STORY.
LIKE, WHERE YOUR PAINTING TURNS OUT TO BE IN THE CATALOG FOR AN ART EXHIBIT FROM THIRTY YEARS AGO, AND THE ARTIST IS LONG DEAD...
D-DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT!

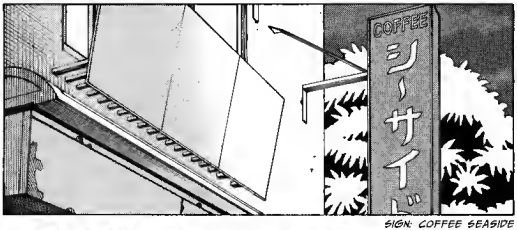

...SHE PRETENDED TO BE AN ART CLUB MEMBER AS A STOPGAP MEASURE. SOUND POSSIBLE?
BUT SINCE HOTORI WAS THERE FOR REMEDIAL CLASS, AND HAPPENED TO RUN INTO HER...
YEAH, THAT'S CONSISTENT.
MAYBE DURING SUMMER BREAK...
...A BURGLAR DISGUISED HERSELF AS A STUDENT TO SNEAK INTO THE EMPTY SCHOOL.


IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD JUST STAYING HERE... LET'S GO.
...
...BUT HER BEHAVIOR REALLY DIDN'T GIVE ME ANY IMPRESSION OF HER BEING A BURGLAR.
I WONDERED ABOUT THAT MYSELF...


MAYBE THAT PAINTING MIGHT REALLY BE OF ME?
YOU KNOW...
...I WAS THINKING ABOUT ONE OF THE PAINTINGS WE JUST SAW.


UM...
THERE SHOULD BE A LIMIT TO HOW SHAMELESS YOU CAN POSSIBLY GET, BUT BOY DID YOU EVER CROSS IT.
OKAY, LET'S GO.
YOU RATTLED THAT OFF AWFULLY FAST...
THIS ONE.

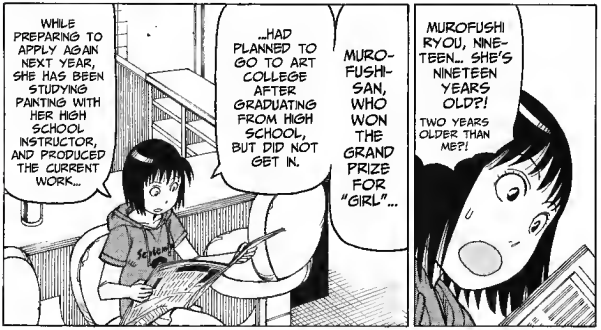
LABEL: "MADONNA"



SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

WELL, THAT'S UNUSUAL FOR YOU. WERE THEY STILL-LIFES OF FOOD?
LOOKING AT PAINTINGS AT THE ART MUSEUM.
WHERE WERE YOU?
AH, LIKE FROM THIS MORNING'S PAPER?
THERE WERE ALL SORTS OF PAINTINGS, RANGING FROM DECENT TO STUFF I FOUND KINDA IFFY.
NO, MODERN ART STUFF.
YEAH... THAT'S IT, THE "TOKYO METRO-POLITAN MODERN ART"...
RUSTLE
THIS EX-HIBIT?

PAPER: MUROFUSHI RYOU (19)


MUROFUSHI RYOU, NINETEEN... SHE'S NINETEEN YEARS OLD?!
TWO YEARS OLDER THAN ME?!
MUROFUSHI-SAN, WHO WON THE GRAND PRIZE FOR "GIRL"...
...HAD PLANNED TO GO TO ART COLLEGE AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, BUT DID NOT GET IN.
WHILE PREPARING TO APPLY AGAIN NEXT YEAR, SHE HAS BEEN STUDYING PAINTING WITH HER HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR, AND PRODUCED THE CURRENT WORK...

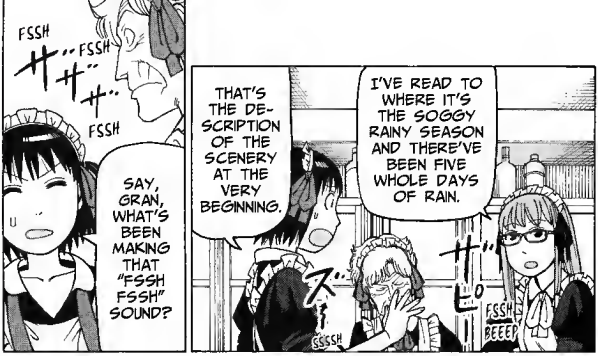
PAPER: GRAND PRIZE, "GIRL" - MUROFUSHI RYOU

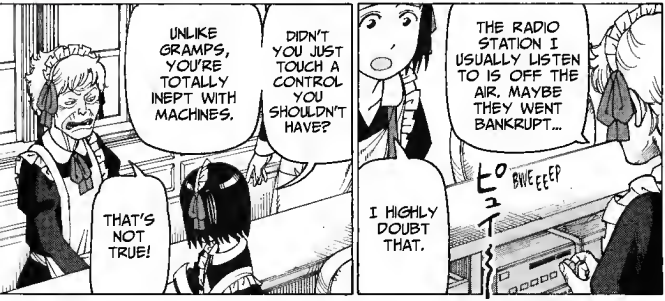
YOU RATTLED THAT LONG LINE OFF AWFULLY SMOOTHLY.
THERE SHOULD BE A LIMIT TO HOW RUDE SOMEONE COULD POSSIBLY BE, BUT BOY DID SHE EVER CROSS IT!

CHAPTER 96 / END

CHAPTER 97
TWO GIRLS ADRIFT IN THE PACIFIC

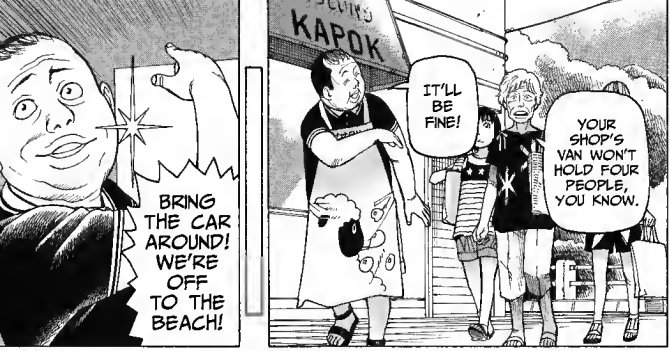
IT'S A SUMMER FOR READING!
DON'T YOU MEAN, AN AUTUMN FOR READING?
AW, C'MON!
READING AND KEEPING A JOURNAL ARE STANDARD SUMMER BREAK HOMEWORK.
FSSSH
FAN: FESTIVAL
HAVE YOU TWO READ THE BOOKS I LOANED YOU?
LOANED US? DON'T YOU MEAN, PUSHED ON US?
YEAH, I READ MINE.
BUT...
BEEEP
THE STORY DIDN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE TO ME.
WHICH PART? I COULD EXPLAIN IT.
PRIMARILY, WHO WAS THE MAIN CHARAC-TER?
THAT MUCH?!
BEEEEEP
AND YOU, TATSUNO-SAN...?


FSSH
FSSH
FSSH
SAY, GRAN, WHAT'S BEEN MAKING THAT "FSSH FSSH" SOUND?
THAT'S THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY AT THE VERY BEGINNING.
I'VE READ TO WHERE IT'S THE SOGGY RAINY SEASON AND THERE'VE BEEN FIVE WHOLE DAYS OF RAIN.
SSSSH
FSSH
BEEEP


UNLIKE GRAMPS, YOU'RE TOTALLY INEPT WITH MACHINES.
DIDN'T YOU JUST TOUCH A CONTROL YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE?
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
THE RADIO STATION I USUALLY LISTEN TO IS OFF THE AIR. MAYBE THEY WENT BANKRUPT...
I HIGHLY DOUBT THAT.
BWEEEEP

WE'RE DONE FOR THE DAY!
NAH, IT'S FINE.
LET ME TAKE A LOOK.

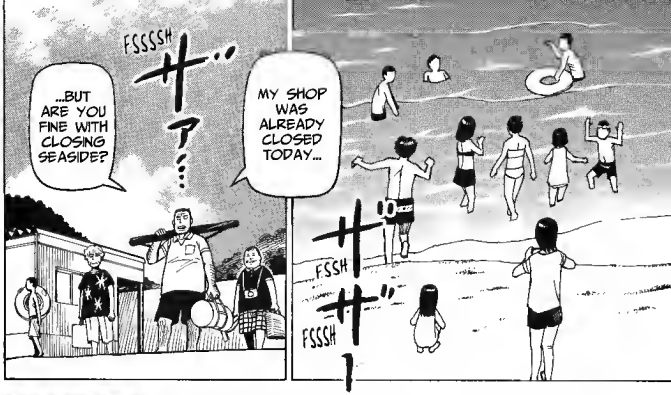
HERE I AM!!
I'LL BUY WHATEVER YOU NEED.
GOT IT?
YOU SPRUNG THIS ON US, SO I'M REALLY NOT PREPARED FOR IT...
WE ARE CLOSED FOR THE DAY!
SORRY!
I CAME TO HAVE LUNCH...
WHAT THE WHAT?
荒井クリーニング
APRON: ARAI DRY CLEANING
OH! I'LL PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION, SO WE CAN ALL GO TOGETHER.
ON A WHIM.
IT'S SUCH A NICE SUMMER DAY, I DECIDED WE'D GO TO THE BEACH.

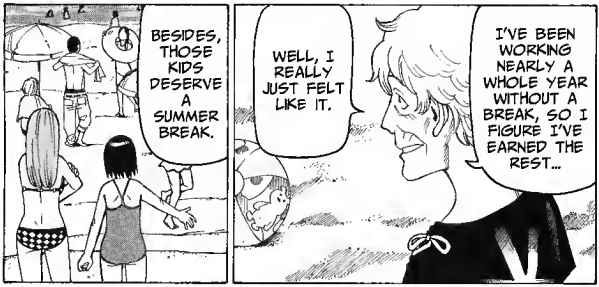


SIGN: KAPOK BREAD

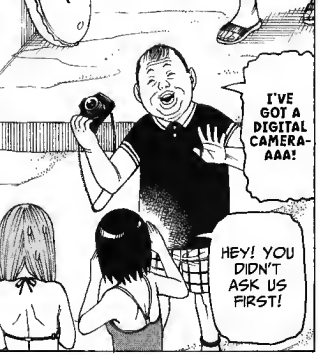
PACKAGE: EGGPLANT GUMMIES

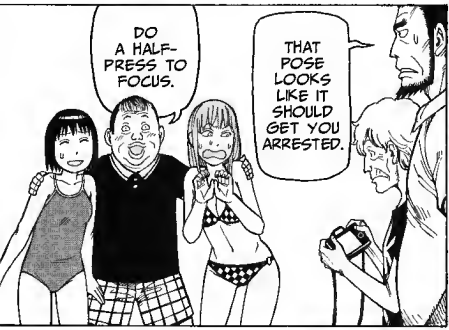
THAT'S THE FIRST CHAPTER OF VOLUME ONE!
YEAH.
I GOT TO WHERE THE MAIN CHARACTER JOINED THE BASKET-BALL TEAM.
...DID YOU READ THE MANGA I LOANED YOU?
BY THE WAY, ARASHI-YAMA-SAN...



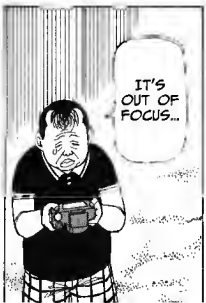

BESIDES, THOSE KIDS DESERVE A SUMMER BREAK.
WELL, I REALLY JUST FELT LIKE IT.
I'VE BEEN WORKING NEARLY A WHOLE YEAR WITHOUT A BREAK, SO I FIGURE I'VE EARNED THE REST...

SIGN: KUJIRAKI.





SEAL: ISOHATA



START ME OFF WITH A YAKI-SOBA.

AND THEN...

SHE ORDERS YAKISOBA LIKE SHE'S SAYING, "START ME OFF WITH A BEER..."

海の家 くじらき

トウモロコシ
フランクフルト

SIGNS: BEACH HOUSE KUJIRAKI / ICE CREAM, GRILLED CORN, HOT DOGS

...THIS IS PURE, UNADULTERATED YAKISOBA.

すん

はぐ

SLUCK

SLURRP

YUM!

NOW...

IF I COULD ONLY BRING ONE THING TO A DESERT ISLAND, IT'D BE YAKISOBA!

もぐっ MUNCH

もぐっ MUNCH

TOO EASY TO BE IMPULSIVE IN THE SUMMER.

DON'T SHOW OFF HOW EMPTY YOUR BRAIN IS.

NOW THAT WE'RE DONE EATING, I'M ALL OUT OF IDEAS.

IF I COULD ONLY BRING ONE THING TO A DESERT ISLAND...
...I'D TAKE THE WHOLE SET OF THE MANGA I LENT YOU!
IT'S THAT GOOD, SO READ IT ALREADY!
'KAAY.
CHOMP
さくっ
ほり
CRUNCH
PUMP
ブシュ
PUMP
ブシュ
PUMP
ブシュ
PUUUMP
ブシュー

TH-THEN, DID YOU BRING A KNIFE?
YOU DUMBASS! YOU'RE SERIOUSLY GOING TO HIT MY WATERMELON WITH A STICK?!

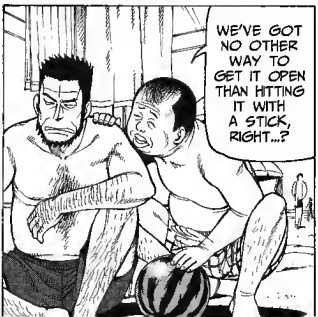
LOOK, I FOUND A GOOD STICK!
LET'S USE IT TO SMASH THAT WATER-MELON YOU BROUGHT.

HUUUUH?! HOW DID YOU EXPECT US TO EAT THIS WATER-MELON, THEN?

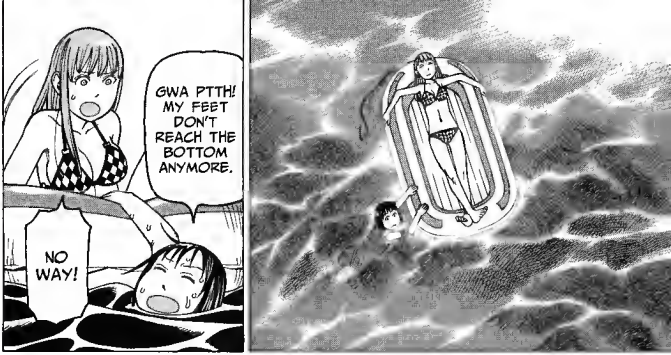
...NO, I DIDN'T.

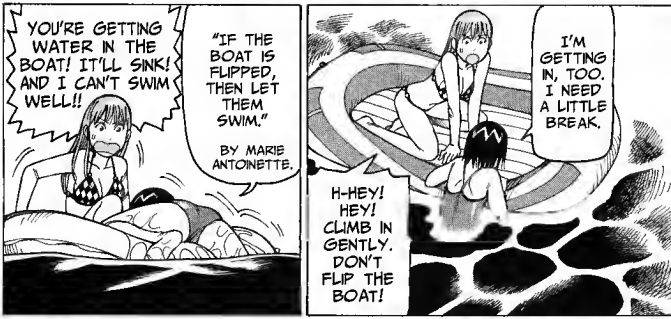
HUH?

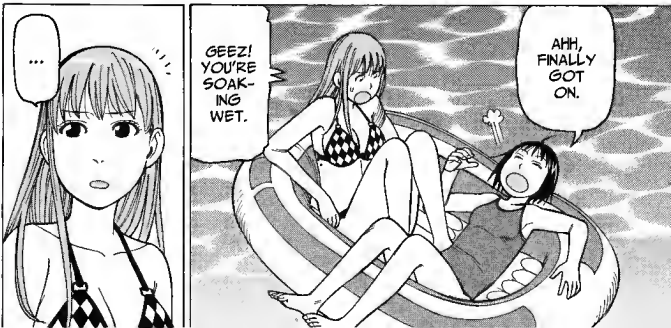
RIGHT?


WE'VE GOT NO OTHER WAY TO GET IT OPEN THAN HITTING IT WITH A STICK, RIGHT...?

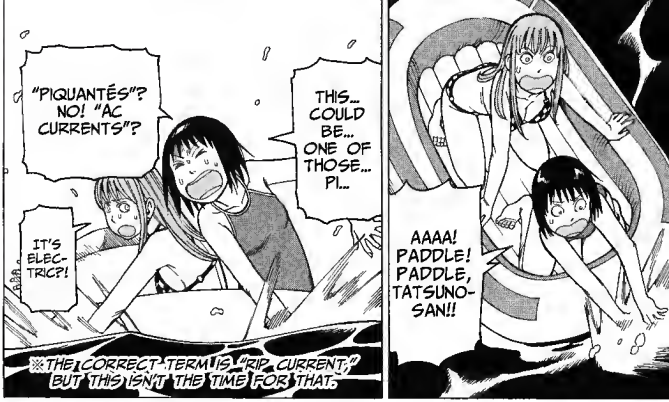
HEY, HOTORI-CHAN! WE'RE READY TO DO SOME WATER-MELON SMASHING!
I'M SORRY!! I'M SO SORRY I GOT COCKY AGAIN!!
HOTORI'S OUT ON THE BOAT WITH TOSHIKO-CHAN.
AW! YOU'VE ES-CAPED DEATH, ASAI.
OH, WELL.
GUESS I'LL TAKE A PICTURE OF HOTORI-CHAN HAVING FUN.
HEY, WAIT!
DON'T DROP THE CAMERA IN THE WATER!!
DON'T YOU DARE DROP IT!!

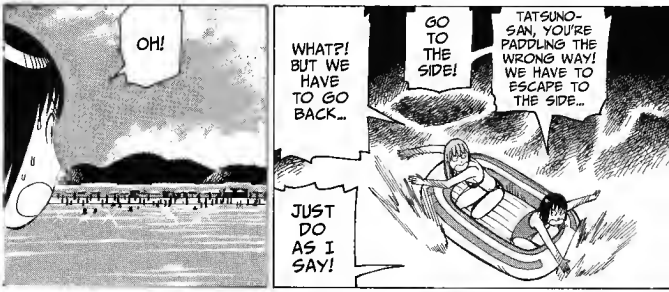

GWA PTTH! MY FEET DON'T REACH THE BOTTOM ANYMORE.
NO WAY!

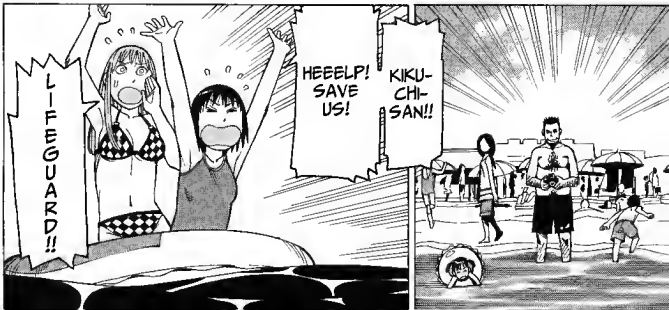

YOU'RE GETTING WATER IN THE BOAT! IT'LL SINK! AND I CAN'T SWIM WELL!!
"IF THE BOAT IS FLIPPED, THEN LET THEM SWIM."
BY MARIE ANTOINETTE.
H-HEY! HEY! CLIMB IN GENTLY. DON'T FLIP THE BOAT!
I'M GETTING IN, TOO. I NEED A LITTLE BREAK.


...
GEEZ! YOU'RE SOAKING WET.
AHH, FINALLY GOT ON.

WH-WHY'D YOU YELL?
THAT STARTLED ME...
ARA-SHI-YAMA-SAN!
AHH... THIS FEELS GREAT... I GUESS LIFE REALLY DID COME FROM THE SEA.
UM... WHILE YOU TOOK YOUR SWEET TIME GETTING IN...
...HASN'T THE BOAT MOVED REALLY FAR OUT?
THIS ISN'T A MOTOR-BOAT, SILLY...
...
.....
.....
FSSH
FSSH
FSSH
FSSH

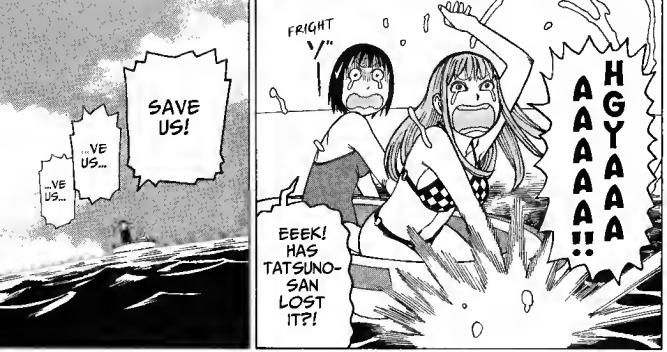

"PIQUANTÉS"? NO! "AC CURRENTS"?
THIS... COULD BE... ONE OF THOSE... PI...
IT'S ELEC-TRIC?!
※THE CORRECT TERM IS "RIP CURRENT," BUT THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT.
AAAA! PADDLE! PADDLE, TATSUNO-SAN!!

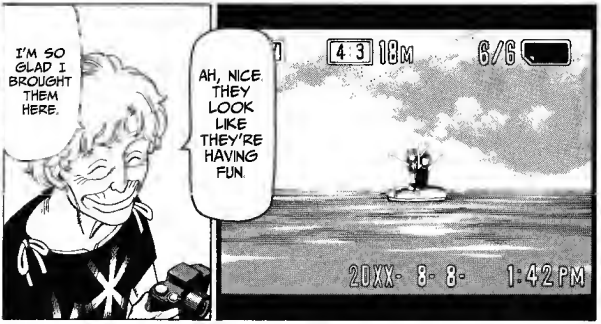

OH!
WHAT?! BUT WE HAVE TO GO BACK...
GO TO THE SIDE!
TATSUNO-SAN, YOU'RE PADDLING THE WRONG WAY! WE HAVE TO ESCAPE TO THE SIDE...
JUST DO AS I SAY!

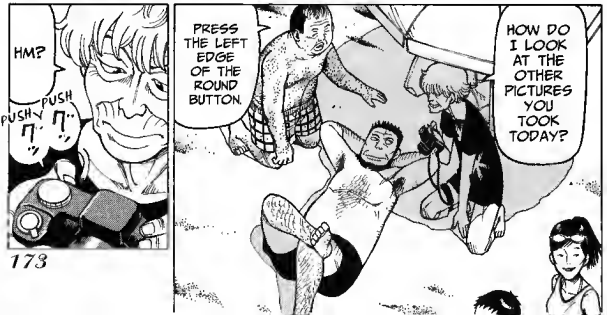

LIFEGUARD!!
HEEELP! SAVE US!
KIKU-CHI-SAN!!

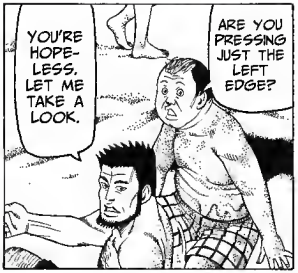
YOO HOO!
I GOT A NICE PICTURE OF THEM HAVING FUN.
ボザー
PLOP
GLUNK
YOU DIDN'T TOUCH IT WITH SALT-WATERY HANDS, DID YOU?!
BEE-BEEP!
ピピッ
HEY, LET ME HAVE A LOOK.

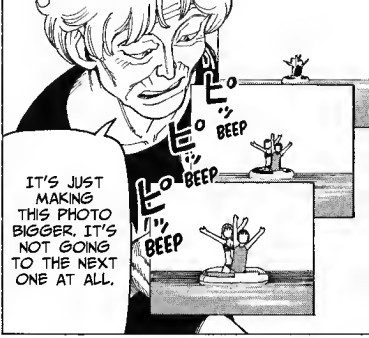
WE'RE DRIFTING OUT INTO OPEN SEA!
THE CURRENT ISN'T STOPPING!
WIDE...
DEEP...
UNFAMILIAR...

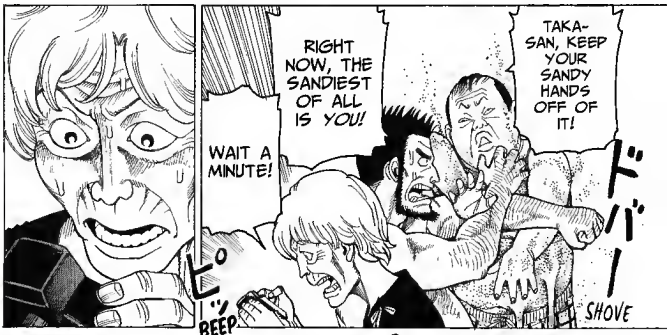

SAVE US!
...VE US...
...VE US...
FRIGHT
EEEK! HAS TATSUNO-SAN LOST IT?!
HGYAAA AAAAA!!


I'M SO GLAD I BROUGHT THEM HERE.
AH, NICE. THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE HAVING FUN.
4:3 18M 6/6
20XX- 8- 8- 1:42 PM


HM?
PUSH
PUSH
PRESS THE LEFT EDGE OF THE ROUND BUTTON.
HOW DO I LOOK AT THE OTHER PICTURES YOU TOOK TODAY?


ARE YOU PRESSING JUST THE LEFT EDGE?
YOU'RE HOPE-LESS. LET ME TAKE A LOOK.

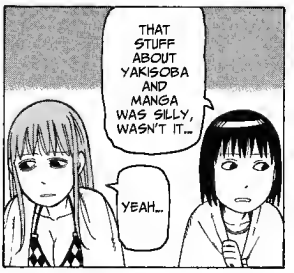

IT'S JUST MAKING THIS PHOTO BIGGER. IT'S NOT GOING TO THE NEXT ONE AT ALL.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

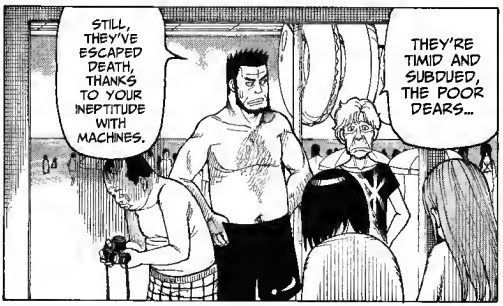

WAIT A MINUTE!
RIGHT NOW, THE SANDIEST OF ALL IS YOU!
TAKA-SAN, KEEP YOUR SANDY HANDS OFF OF IT!
BEEP
SHOVE

THEY'RE CALLING FOR HELP?!
BEEP
THEY AREN'T PLAYING AROUND...
BEEP
THEIR...
THEIR FACES...

I CAN'T SEE THE GIRLS ANY-MORE!!
THEY'VE DRIFTED OUT TO SEA!!
OH MY GOD!!
SUR

SIGN: SHAVED ICE ¥300 STRAWBERRY, LEMON, MELON, HAWAIIAN, EGGPLANT + ¥50, HONEY





CHAPTER 97 / END

FOODS KON-SENPAI DISLIKES

I DON'T LIKE SWEET-AND-SOUR PORK WITH PINEAPPLE, OR ANY SWEET-AND-SOUR THING WITH TANGERINES IN IT.
I DON'T LIKE BEAN JAM. IT'S MUSHY.
ESPECIALLY WHITE BEAN JAM.
I DON'T LIKE FRIED FOOD WITH LEMON JUICE.
I HATE WHEN SANDWICH BREAD GETS SOGGY FROM TOPPINGS LIKE CUCUMBERS OR TOMATO!
I DON'T LIKE CHICKEN SKIN.
I DON'T LIKE ANY SOFT-SERVE ICE CREAM BESIDES VANILLA.

NOW FOR MY IMPRESSION OF MIZOGUCHI THE MUSIC TEACHER!

シーサイド

メイド喫茶 シーサイド

SIGNS: COFFEE SEASIDE / MAID CAFE SEASIDE

CLAP CLAP パチパチ

CLAP CLAP パチパチ

CLAP CLAP パチパチ

YEAH! YEAH!

DUNNO WHO THAT IS, THOUGH.

DON'T DROP YOUR JAW!

SING BY RAISING YOUR UPPER JAW! ALL RIGHT?

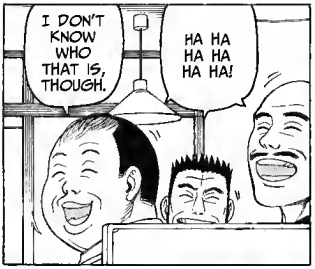
NOW, A-ONE, A-TWO...

カン TONK カン TONK

TROIS!

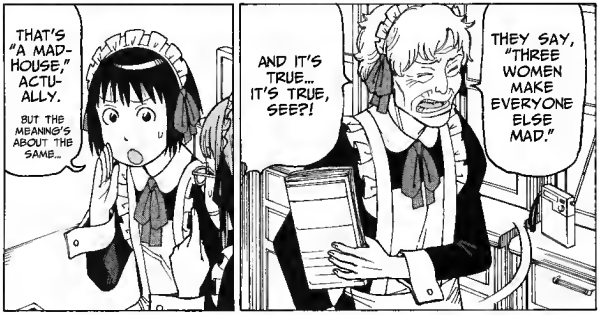
くりっ BRIGHT-EYED

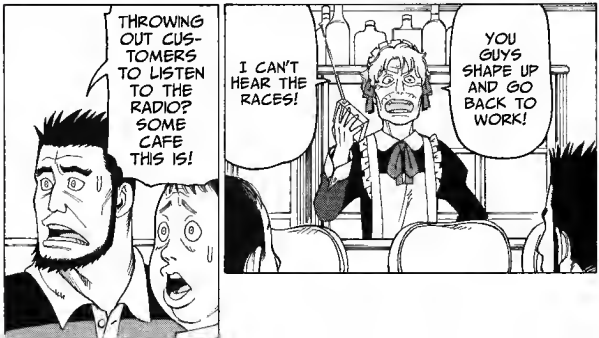
GO!

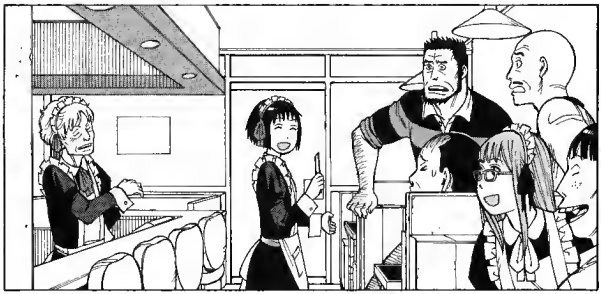


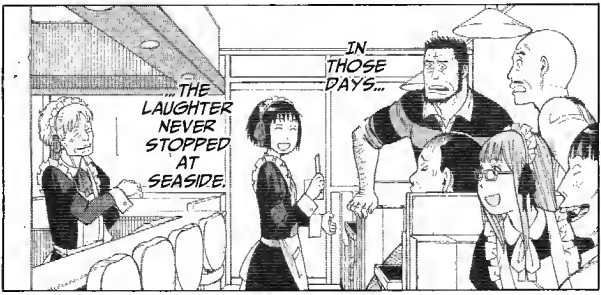
NOTE: "DEPAATO" IS THE ENGLISH-DERIVED WORD JAPANESE USES FOR "DEPARTMENT STORE"

PAPER: BARNABY HORSE RACES


THAT'S "A MAD-HOUSE," ACTU-ALLY.
BUT THE MEANING'S ABOUT THE SAME...
AND IT'S TRUE... IT'S TRUE, SEE?!
THEY SAY, "THREE WOMEN MAKE EVERYONE ELSE MAD."

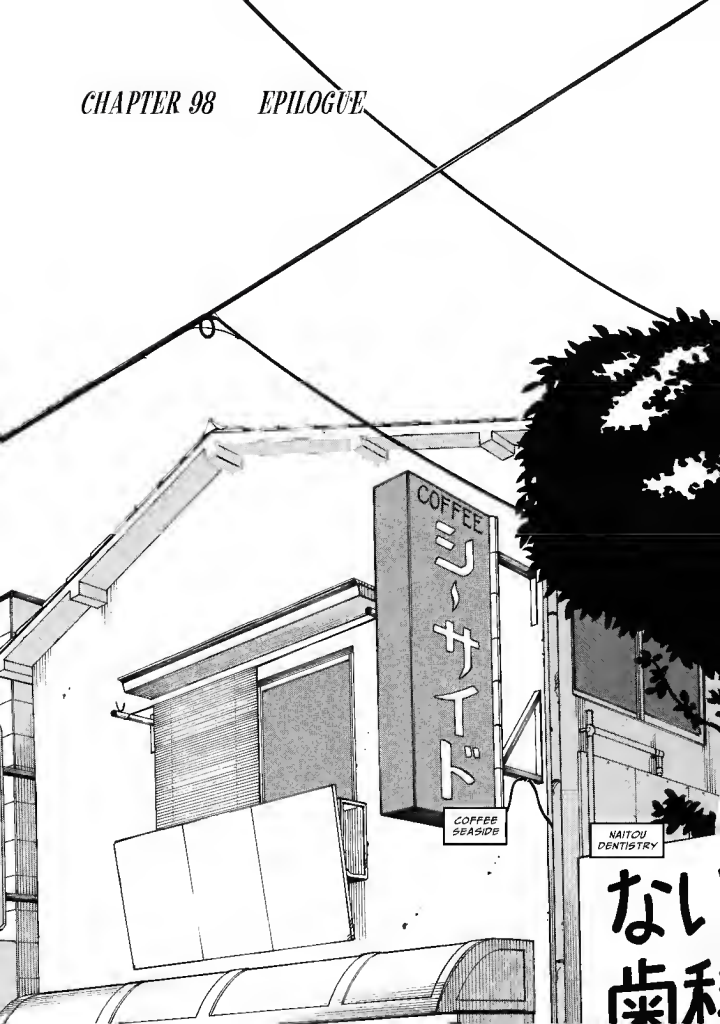


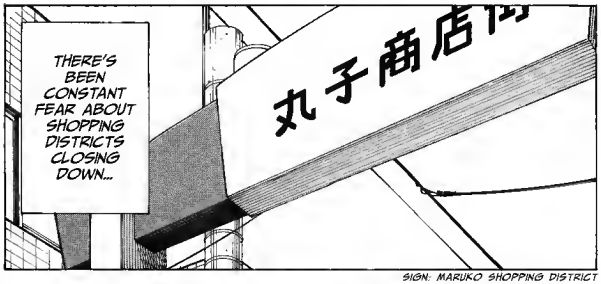




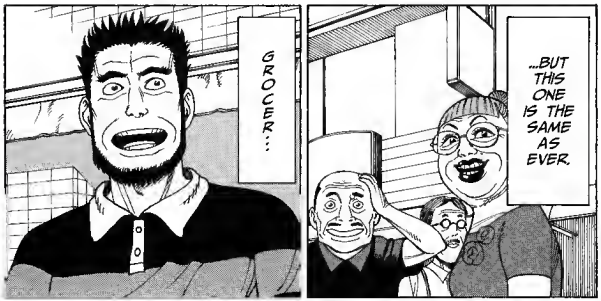
TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THEN.

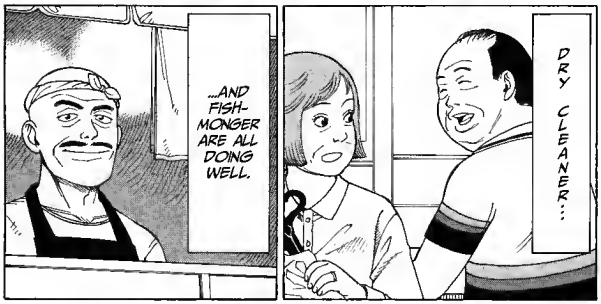
CHAPTER 98 EPILOGUE





SIGN: MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT



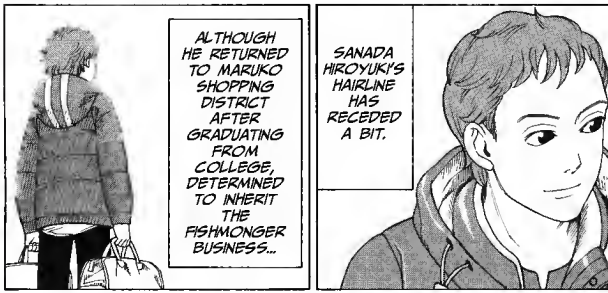


HISTORY MUST REPEAT ITSELF, BECAUSE...
OF COURSE, BOTH CAFE SEASIDE AND GRAN ARE GOING STRONG.
剣道
喫茶
シーサイド
YUKIKO PROPOSED TURNING IT INTO A KENDO CAFE...
...MY LITTLE SISTER, YUKIKO, ALSO WORKS AT THE CAFE.

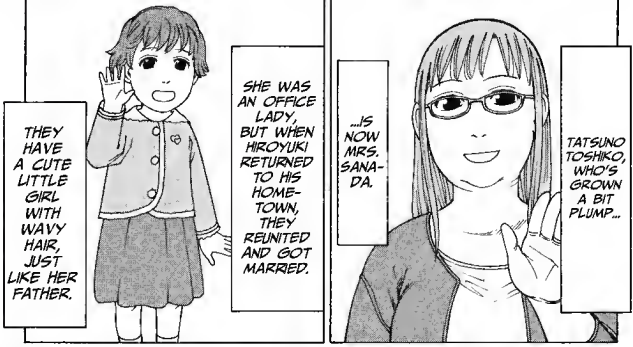
SIGN: KENDO CAFE SEASIDE

YUKIKO WILL BE STARTING COLLEGE NEXT SPRING.
...HER IDEA WAS REJECTED.
...BUT SINCE THE GAUNTLETS WOULD HAVE BEEN AWKWARD FOR THE WAITRESSES...

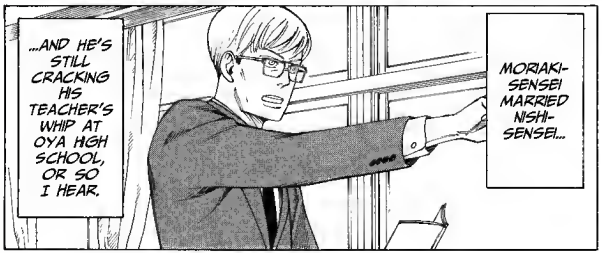
AS FOR TAKERU...
...HE'S AT A TOP SCHOOL, AND IS STUDYING TO BECOME A LAWYER.
HE SAYS IT'S TO BE READY FOR WHEN YUKIKO BREAKS THE LAW.


SANADA HIROYUKI'S HAIRLINE HAS RECEDED A BIT.
ALTHOUGH HE RETURNED TO MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT AFTER GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE, DETERMINED TO INHERIT THE FISHMONGER BUSINESS...

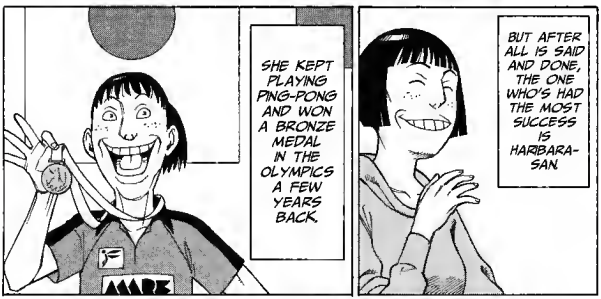
...HIS FATHER CONTINUES TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH, SO HE RENTED A NEARBY APARTMENT AND IS NOW AN OFFICE WORKER.
I'M OFF TO WORK, DEAR!


TATSUNO TOSHIKO, WHO'S GROWN A BIT PLUMP...
...IS NOW MRS. SANADA.
SHE WAS AN OFFICE LADY, BUT WHEN HIROYUKI RETURNED TO HIS HOMETOWN, THEY REUNITED AND GOT MARRIED.
THEY HAVE A CUTE LITTLE GIRL WITH WAVY HAIR, JUST LIKE HER FATHER.

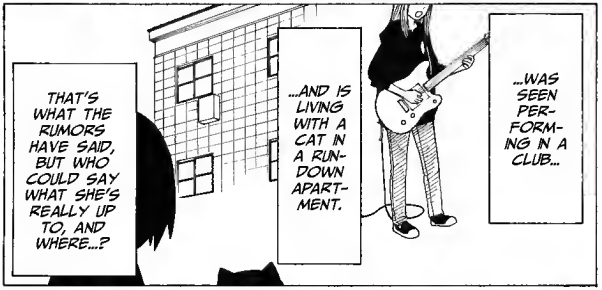
MATSUDA-SAN, WHO HAD BEEN A PATROL OFFICER...
...IS NOW A POLICE SERGEANT AT THE KAMATA STATION.
WHEN HE LEFT, HE TOLD ME:
I ENTRUST YOU TO KEEP THE PEACE HERE!
SO I WILL.


MORIAKI-SENSEI MARRIED NISHI-SENSEI...
...AND HE'S STILL CRACKING HIS TEACHER'S WHIP AT OYA HIGH SCHOOL, OR SO I HEAR.

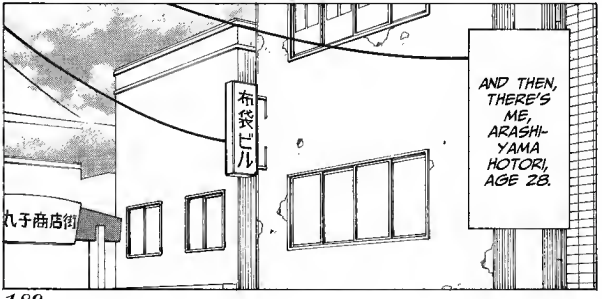
SHIZUKA-NEECHAN HAS DEBUTED AS A NOVELIST.
WHILE CONTINUING TO RUN THE SECONDHAND GOODS STORE, SHE'S CURRENTLY WORKING ON A MYSTERY SERIES WITH A HEROINE BASED ON ME.

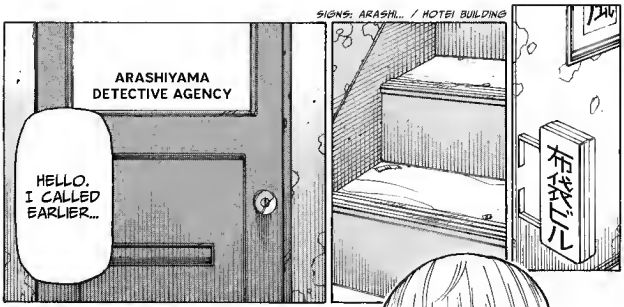

SHE KEPT PLAYING PING-PONG AND WON A BRONZE MEDAL IN THE OLYMPICS A FEW YEARS BACK.
BUT AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, THE ONE WHO'S HAD THE MOST SUCCESS IS HARIBARA-SAN.

IT KICKED OFF A HUGE PING-PONG CRAZE IN JAPAN.
POPULAR FOR HER OUTGOING PERSONALITY, SHE HAS EVEN STARRED IN COMMERCIALS FOR FAMOUS COMPANIES.


THAT'S WHAT THE RUMORS HAVE SAID, BUT WHO COULD SAY WHAT SHE'S REALLY UP TO, AND WHERE...?
...AND IS LIVING WITH A CAT IN A RUN-DOWN APARTMENT.
...WAS SEEN PERFORMING IN A CLUB...

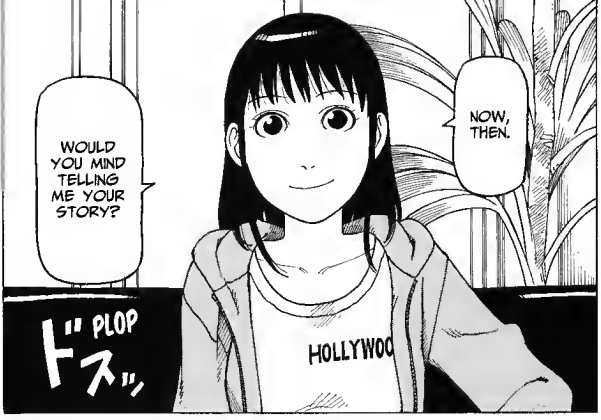
SIGNS: MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT / HOTEI BUILDING

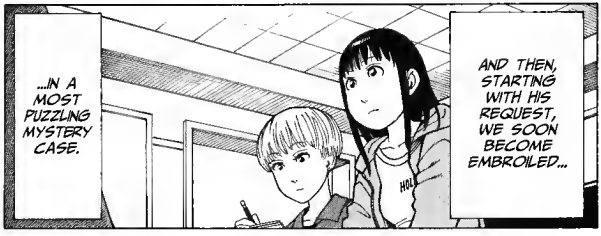



ARASHIYAMA
DETECTIVE AGENCY
HELLO. I CALLED EARLIER...
ホテイビル

ARE YOU ARASHI-YAMA-SENSEI?
MY NAME IS KON. I AM EMPLOYED HERE AS AN ASSISTANT.
I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
PLEASE, COME IN.

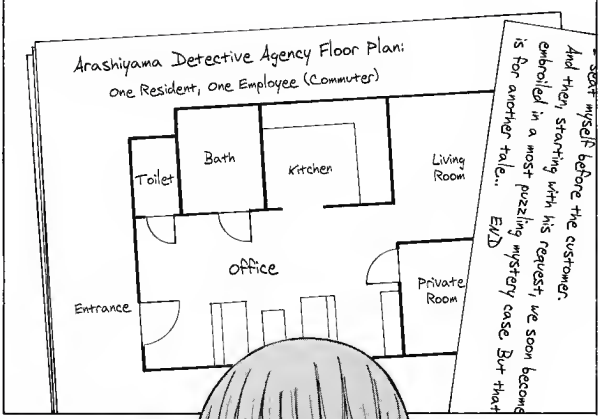
HOTORI! WE'VE GOT A CUSTOMER.
COME ON AL-READY!
OKAY, OKAAAAY...

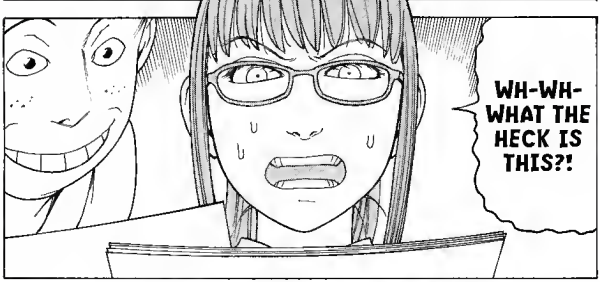




BUT THAT... IS FOR ANOTHER TALE...

THE END

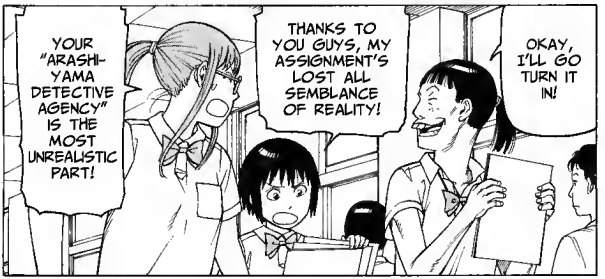

Arashiyama Detective Agency Floor Plan:
one Resident, one Employee (Commuter)
Toilet
Bath
Kitchen
Living Room
Office
Private Room
Entrance
...sent myself before the customer.
And then, starting with his request, we soon become embroiled in a most puzzling mystery case. But that is for another tale...
END

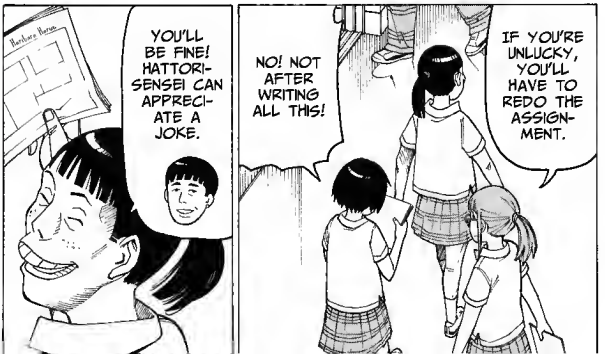

WH-WH-WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?!

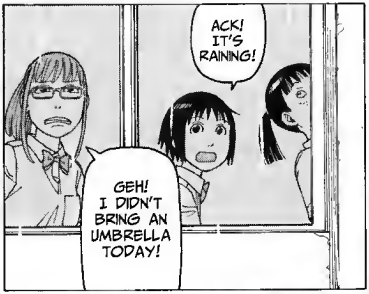
THAT WASN'T A COMPLIMENT. DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE POINT OF THE ASSIGNMENT?
EH HEH, IT SORTA WROTE ITSELF...
YOU ENDED UP WRITING SOMETHING LIKE AN EPILOGUE TO A GRAND TALE.

WELL... I GUESS I JUST COULDN'T DEPICT THE MAIN CHARACTER REALISTICALLY WITHOUT ALSO INCLUDING THE PEOPLE AROUND HER.
I MEAN, I'M A NOVELIST THROUGH AND THROUGH.
IF YOU KNEW, WHY DID IT TURN OUT LIKE THAT?!
DESCRIBE YOUR FUTURE SELF, AND DRAW A FLOOR PLAN OF THE PLACE YOU'D BE LIVING IN, RIGHT?
IT'S MY ASSIGNMENT, SO WHAT I WRITE IS UP TO ME...
ベレ
WHAP
NO!
WHAT'S SO REALISTIC ABOUT THIS, DUMMY?! WHY HAVE ME "GROW A BIT PLUMP"?! ERASE THAT LINE! REWRITE IT!!
GOOD! NOW GIVE MY HUSBAND MORE HAIR.
MRS. SANADA IS EX-TREMELY BEAUTIFUL.

I'LL SHOW THIS TO SANADA-KUN AND SEE HIS REACTION.
HEY! DON'T DO THAT!
CHANGE MY MEDAL TO GOLD, TOO.
IT'S JUST FICTION ANYWAY, SO WHY NOT GO ALL OUT?


OKAY, I'LL GO TURN IT IN!
THANKS TO YOU GUYS, MY ASSIGNMENT'S LOST ALL SEMBLANCE OF REALITY!
YOUR "ARASHI-YAMA DETECTIVE AGENCY" IS THE MOST UNREALISTIC PART!


IF YOU'RE UNLUCKY, YOU'LL HAVE TO REDO THE ASSIGN-MENT.
NO! NOT AFTER WRITING ALL THIS!
YOU'LL BE FINE! HATTORI-SENSEI CAN APPRECI-ATE A JOKE.


ACK! IT'S RAINING!
GEH! I DIDN'T BRING AN UMBRELLA TODAY!

SHHHHH

THIS IS THAT THING, RIGHT?
A FOX'S...

BUT IT'S ALSO SUNNY, SO IT'LL STOP SOON.

.....
.....
WEDDING?
WEDDING?

CHAPTER 98 / END

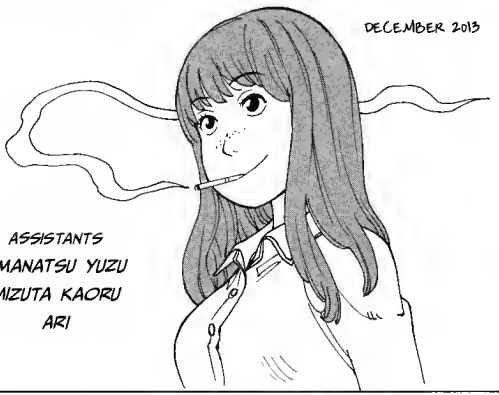
AFTERWORD

JUST SO YOU KNOW, THIS ISN'T THE END OF THE SERIES. IT'S GOING TO KEEP GOING FOR A LITTLE LONGER. WHEN THE LAST CHAPTER OF THIS VOLUME, "EPILOGUE," WAS PUBLISHED IN THE MAGAZINE, A THEORY WENT AROUND THE INTERNET THAT IT WAS THE FINAL CHAPTER (LOL). I THINK THAT, EVEN NOW, SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE IT AND THINK *SOREMACHI* ENDED ALREADY.

FOR "A-KO-GA-RE LONGING" I USED AN EXISTING SONG IN THE CHAPTER. I CITED THE ACTUAL NAME SO THAT I COULD PICTURE KON-SENPAI'S SINGING CONCRETELY, BUT MY EDITOR HAD TO GO THROUGH A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE BEFORE FINALLY GETTING PERMISSION FROM CYNDI LAUPER! PLEASE LISTEN TO THE CD WHILE READING.

SPEAKING OF CDS, IT'S BECOME MORE AND MORE COMMON TO PURCHASE MUSIC AND MOVIES DIGITALLY, AND EVEN PUBLICATIONS ARE ON THE VERGE OF BEING SWALLOWED UP BY THE DIGITAL WAVE. AND THUS, THE HISTORICAL GAP SINCE THE TIME WHEN *SOREMACHI* BEGAN SERIALIZATION (ABOUT NINE YEARS AGO?) KEEPS GROWING. BACK THEN, I NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED THAT LIVING ROOM TVS THROUGHOUT JAPAN WOULD BECOME FLAT-SCREENS.

DECEMBER 2013



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AMANATSU YUZU
MIZUTA KAORU
ARI